CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 2 June 1998, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Mr. Sungar (Turkey)

GE.98-62195 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 795th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have a very long list of speakers, starting with New Zealand, Germany and so on. I am not going to read the list itself.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I should like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Turkey.

Following the nuclear tests by Pakistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey issued a statement last week. The unofficial translation of the statement reads as follows:

> "The Turkish Foreign Ministry previously issued a statement on nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May 1998, and emphasized its opposition to all nuclear tests which in many ways threaten the future of mankind, as well as underlining the possible diverse effects of these tests on the ongoing international efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament.
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> "Having considered in this context the tests conducted by Pakistan on 28 and 30 May, claimed to constitute a reaction to the Indian tests, the Turkish Government expresses its concern about the regional and global implications of these tests.
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> "Turkey believes that it is especially important for the two countries to refrain from any show of strength at possible points of confrontation and to actively seek ways for the peaceful settlement of the existing issues between them.
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> "Turkey earnestly hopes that these regrettable developments would not lead to a new nuclear arms race, Hence, Turkey expects India and Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint bearing in mind their regional responsibilities as well as their humanitarian commitments."

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems, constitutes an extremely serious threat to international peace and security. Since it affects the security of all members of the international community, we cannot remain indifferent to these nuclear tests, which have destabilized the political situation in South Asia and beyond. The new crisis, therefore, needs to be urgently and comprehensively addressed.

India's and Pakistan's commitment to nuclear disarmament are well known. We earnestly hope that these two neighbouring countries will refrain from further tests and the deployment of missiles with nuclear warheads.

We also add our voice to calls on India and Pakistan to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Furthermore, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament should initiate without delay negotiations on a treaty to prohibit the production of

(The President)

fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). I am confident that as we explore existing opportunities, I can count on the full support of all members of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should now like to give the floor to the first speaker on my list, Ambassador Pearson of New Zealand, who will also be speaking on behalf of a number of delegations.

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): Mr. President, first may I take the opportunity to congratulate you on assuming the presidency? It is good to see you in the Chair and you can rely on the full support of my delegation.

I am taking the floor at this special session to read into the record a statement from the following member States and observers of the Conference: Australia, New Zealand, United States of America, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Ukraine, Canada, Greece, Slovakia, Hungary, Sweden, Belarus, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Norway, Philippines, Denmark, Italy, Romania, Croatia, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Japan, Malta, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Republic of Korea, France, China, Turkey, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Chile, Ireland, Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Portugal, Slovenia and Belgium.

They are alarmed and deeply concerned at nuclear testing by India and Pakistan.

They condemn all nuclear testing and consider such acts to be contrary to the international consensus which bans the testing of nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

The tests undertaken by India and Pakistan's decision to respond with its own tests blatantly undermine the international regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The actions of India and Pakistan threaten and undermine the process of disarmament and the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons altogether.

The testing of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan is totally irreconcilable with claims by both countries that they are committed to nuclear disarmament.

International security will not be enhanced by provocative and dangerous acts. Nor will regional or global security be improved or maintained by indulging in competitive manoeuvres to further develop nuclear capability and delivery systems. The approach that India and Pakistan seem determined to pursue belongs to a bygone age.

Peace in the Asia region is a global concern. Tensions will only be resolved permanently through constructive dialogue and negotiation.

It is now crucial that India and Pakistan announce immediately a cessation to all further testing of these weapons, renounce their nuclear-weapons programmes and sign and ratify, unconditionally, the

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. This is a matter of urgency and essential for generating the confidence necessary for security differences to be resolved through dialogue and negotiation.

We also call on India and Pakistan to accede, without delay, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to join all States in ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to engage in negotiations to conclude a ban on the production of fissile material. These are further essential steps that should be taken in the process of working collectively and constructively towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

This is a moment for all countries to exercise calm and maximum restraint. We call on India and Pakistan to abandon immediately the course of action they are pursuing and to settle their security concerns and differences through political engagement. Such an approach will have the full support of the international community which is striving towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Germany fully associates itself with the statement presented by the distinguished delegate of New Zealand and which was co-sponsored by many States. I should also like to point out how Germany assesses recent events.

The Pakistan nuclear tests, like the India tests a fortnight before, have alarmed the whole world. The German Government deeply deplores Pakistan's decision to ignore worldwide appeals for restraint by going ahead with nuclear tests of its own. We condemn the Pakistan tests just as we condemned the preceding Indian tests. Both countries have seriously undermined the hopes of people everywhere for a world free of nuclear weapons. The international community will not go back to business as usual. India and Pakistan must expect painful and long-term consequences if they continue to defy the international consensus in favour of nuclear non-proliferation. With 186 countries having signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and 149 the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, India and Pakistan will not be able to remain outsiders for ever.

The German Government therefore appeals to the political leaders of both countries to return to the path of reason. India and Pakistan must give a binding commitment to halt nuclear testing for good and accede to the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty unconditionally and without delay. On 28 May 1998 the German Bundestag approved the Treaty by an overwhelming majority and it will be ratified shortly. Only with the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty is there any hope that nuclear tests can finally be consigned to the past and a new nuclear arms race be prevented.

It is equally urgent now to open negotiations at an early date, on the basis of the mandate adopted by this Conference in 1995, on a comprehensive ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan should realize that only a comprehensive, effectively verifiable ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons can effectively counter the now substantially increased risks of proliferation of nuclear weapons and a build-up of nuclear-weapons arsenals.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

The German Government hopes that the political leaders, on soberly assessing the new situation that has arisen, will recognize the need for rapid and determined steps towards this goal and act without delay. Progress on nuclear disarmament, too, is more urgent than ever. The international community is looking for further important signals such as the ratification by the Russian Duma of the START II treaty, to be followed immediately by the opening of START III negotiations. In the coming twenty-first century nuclear disarmament, the common commitment of the 186 parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, must finally become a reality.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, on behalf of the Canadian delegation, may I welcome you to the CD and welcome you to the Chair. We will do our best to cooperate with you in making the work of this Conference as productive and as successful as possible.

We are pleased to associate Canada with the statement by New Zealand on behalf of Australia, as well as a number of other States from across all regional groups, condemning all nuclear testing, in particular the Indian and Pakistani tests.

In associating itself with this statement, the Canadian delegation recalls that Prime Minister Chrétien and Foreign Minister Axworthy responded immediately to the testing by each State. We intervened in this Conference on 14 May to convey their condemnation of Indian testing. Speaking on 28 May, Prime Minister Chrétien condemned the Pakistani actions. The Prime Minister said that:

> "Canada is deeply disappointed that the Pakistani Government did not heed the international call for restraint, but chose to act in a manner contrary to the international norms established by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty ... On behalf of all Canadians, I urge both Pakistan and India to renounce their nuclear-weapons programme and to sign on to the NPT and CTBT. I also urge them to renew regional dialogue and work toward a peaceful resolution of differences."

Speaking on 30 May, Minister Axworthy said:

> "The Pakistani Government's decision to carry out another series of nuclear tests is a highly irresponsible act."

Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister emphasized that these tests have profound consequences for international security and for regional security. We firmly believe neither India nor Pakistan "win" by these actions.

There have been a number of statements by India and Pakistan as to the motivations for these tests and the consequent increase in regional tensions. There has also been much media speculation and reporting about actual, possible and proposed reactions to them. Canada readily recognizes that any sustainable resolution of the sources of this escalation in regional tensions

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

will require positive and creative action - primarily by the States directly concerned, but also supported by the broader international community. Such a resolution will need to deal with political, security and other dimensions - not least of which is the nuclear dimension itself. It is this last element upon which we wish to expand briefly here this morning - not least of all due to some of the media reporting and speculation already referred to.

Canada strongly considers that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the foundation for the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. That Treaty defines the international community as being comprised of five nuclear-weapon States and 181 non-nuclear States, with a small number of other States outside the regime. That Treaty establishes the imperative for nuclear disarmament through article VI. That Treaty is the basis upon which subsequent nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation instruments are based, such as the CTBT and hopefully an effective FMCT. That Treaty is the essential building block for nuclear-weapon-free-zones. And that Treaty provides the critical framework for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, for the comprehensive IAEA safeguards regime and for the NSG Guidelines.

No other treaty is able to meet all of these tests. No other treaty or combination of treaties can substitute for the NPT in doing so. This central reality must be kept in mind by all concerned as we proceed. And - an obvious point - we must all continue to strive for the full and effective implementation of the NPT across the board.

It is this essential point that Canada will continue to emphasize. This point is one element of the joint statement that we have just heard and to which we wish to draw particular attention here this morning. If the international community forgets this, we will, in effect, be redefining the international community in the nuclear field with all of the challenges and all of the dangers that that will include. Canada will remain categorically opposed to any such move, tacit or explicit.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to congratulate you on becoming President of our Conference at a time when you have just taken up your duties in Geneva. We are convinced that under your guidance our work will be crowned with success. Your personal qualities offer us grounds for hope in this regard, principally at this stage of our proceedings which is important in more than one respect.

My delegation has already taken the floor on 21 May and referred to the events at that time in South Asia. Today, now that further tests have occurred by way of response to the first tests in the same region, my delegation wishes to renew its expression of concern and remind the Conference that the Gordian knot and the very crux of the problem lies in the way in which the international community must manage international security in the nuclear sphere through its inseparable and interactive dimensions - for it is truly management that is required. Depending on whether it adopts an integrated and coherent approach, this management will definitely reveal its beneficial or harmful aspects. Because today many questions are being posed

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

concerning the non-proliferation regime. These crucially affect efforts to preserve, at any cost, the achievements that have already been made in this field and to protect them.

How can we carry out these tasks and what steps must be taken for this purpose? They fall in three areas. The first matter of urgency is to ensure that what has occurred in South Asia will not also occur in other regions of the world, in order not to endanger the whole structure of non-proliferation. Current events in South Asia should not make us forget that in the Middle East, a highly sensitive region, the nuclear threat continues to hover and threaten the now weakened non-proliferation regime. It is now time to break the rule of silence about Israel's nuclear potential, and one of the immediate duties of the international community is to compel that country to join the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. There can be no policy of double standards in this regard.

The second action is to promote the CTBT in its spirit and its letter in order to impose a genuine ban on nuclear tests of every kind, and to strengthen the NPT, inter alia through the application of its provisions in good faith and the development of its review procedure.

Finally, the third step, which is also a matter of urgency, is to adopt here in the Conference on Disarmament measures that have been drawn up collectively in an ad hoc committee entrusted with nuclear disarmament. These measures must supplement a programme of nuclear disarmament that has already been outlined by the CTBT and through our agreement of principle to negotiate a convention to ban fissile material for military purposes. We are convinced that these activities, if they could be undertaken - and they should have been embarked upon a long time ago - would safeguard the non-proliferation regime, the future of which depends on the breadth and sense of responsibility with which nuclear disarmament is addressed and handled. To continue seeking to promote one without the other is in fact to promote one at the expense of the other and ultimately to throw both into imbalance. Our action must focus on these fundamental aspects - prevention first, followed by consolidation and lastly promotion.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, let me first wish you well in your work over the weeks ahead. Like others, I have asked for the floor in connection with the series of nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan in the course of the past week.

This is a statement which we had fervently hoped would not have been necessary. Ireland is extremely disappointed that the intensive diplomatic efforts so widely undertaken to encourage Pakistan to exercise restraint were not successful.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland has expressed his dismay and deep concern at these tests and we have raised the matter directly with the Pakistan authorities.

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

While we acknowledge that there was understandable concern in Pakistan for its security, national sovereignty and territorial integrity, these nuclear tests, far from enhancing Pakistan's security, have further raised tensions in the region and will undoubtedly have much wider implications for nuclear proliferation.

Following the five nuclear tests carried out by India earlier this month, Pakistan's action is another extremely serious setback to nuclear non-proliferation and to the prospect of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

These blatant challenges to nuclear non-proliferation are sapping the very foundations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They underline the urgent imperative of universal adherence to the NPT, including by the three nuclear-weapons-capable States, India, Pakistan and Israel, and the implementation by all States parties of all the provisions of the NPT. The priority now is to examine across the board the steps necessary to pull back from this destructive nuclear course.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, this is the first time my delegation has had the honour to take the floor under your presidency. I would therefore like to congratulate you on taking up these lofty duties and to pledge to you the full support of the Swiss delegation in the discharge of your task. We are confident that the excellent cooperation between the delegations of Turkey and Switzerland will develop yet further. I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Taher Al-Hussami of Syria, who did such a good job in preparing a framework for our future work.

I take the floor today to inform you that the Swiss authorities learned with deep regret that Pakistan has carried out several nuclear tests since 28 and 30 May. The Pakistani nuclear tests, like the Indian tests, subject the implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to new risks. Although this series of tests does not breach any international treaty to which Pakistan has acceded and constitutes a direct response to the recent Indian tests, it clearly runs counter to the efforts of the international community to prevent nuclear proliferation. It is part of a dangerous arms race in the region, a race which does not involve just nuclear weapons but also missiles.

In order to avoid the serious consequences that these nuclear tests could entail for regional and international stability, Switzerland calls on the Pakistani authorities to refrain from further nuclear testing in any manner whatsoever and to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Switzerland would like to appeal both to Pakistan and to India to ensure that the spiral of mounting tension is ended and the problems are settled peacefully. This would involve in particular establishing a constructive dialogue to reduce the current tension and to rebuild the foundations of mutual trust. We welcome the efforts already undertaken in this regard, and in particular the expression of a willingness to negotiate manifested by New Delhi as well as Islamabad. Any support of this dialogue would be welcome. We are particularly grateful for the offer made by the United Nations

(Mr. Hofer, Switzerland)

Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and we appreciate the review that the nuclear Powers wish to begin at a very high level. The Swiss Government would like to confirm its will and its readiness to support this process. Switzerland also hopes that all the States which are neighbours of India and Pakistan will renounce the temptation to continue the arms race and will avoid any action that could jeopardize peace and security in South Asia.

These new explosions once again raise the question of progress in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. They also raise the problem of the unequal world nuclear order and the profound concern of States that do not possess nuclear weapons concerning the slow practical implementation of the disarmament promises made under article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The States parties to the NPT should bear these problems in mind in their approach at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference in the year 2000. There is a need in particular to embark properly on the preparations for this meeting, for instance on the sidelines of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in New York this autumn.

We are convinced that the Conference on Disarmament remains the proper forum to conduct negotiations on certain aspects of nuclear disarmament and the control of nuclear armaments, beginning with a treaty to halt the production of fissile material for military purposes. The consultations that you have just begun, Mr. President, with the support of your predecessor and your successor, on ways and means to be adopted in order to make progress towards the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament are therefore of crucial importance. We congratulate you. Despite the rather unfavourable current circumstances - but perhaps precisely because of those circumstances - we encourage you to pursue this process vigorously in the search for common ground, inter alia among all those who have submitted proposals relating to item 1 on our agenda. Your consultations reflect the remarkable fact that at the end of March the President of the Conference on Disarmament succeeded in identifying these matters as issues of the highest priority. The recent nuclear explosions in India and Pakistan should encourage the nuclear Powers, the international community and the Conference on Disarmament to redouble their efforts in this field.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to see you in the Chair despite your very recent arrival. You deserve credit for having assumed such onerous responsibilities. Your predecessor, Ambassador Taher Al-Hussami of Syria, performed his task with distinction, and we thank him for it.

We associate ourselves with all those appealing for restraint at these critical times.

To the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, the Bangladesh delegation has a simple message.

It will not help matters to get unduly exercised over the evolving situation in South Asia.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

India and Pakistan are not the first and second countries to have demonstrated a nuclear-weapon capability, but only the sixth and seventh.

What is new, though, is for the first time this so-called "ultimate military power" has now passed on to the part of the world that has historically been subject to colonial domination.

The subcontinent, therefore, can be seen by many as wanting to redefine its relationship with the rest of the world.

This should and indeed can be done in a positive and constructive manner by all concerned.

However, it calls for a high degree of maturity, understanding, empathy and political engineering. It demands new ways of thinking for a forum such as this as to how to proceed.

The South Asian region that India and Pakistan belong to is heir to a rich and ancient civilization.

Their peoples share a modicum of pride in that, which is understandable.

They do not like any lesser degree of rationality to be attributed to their behaviour pattern than is perceived to be a feature of other peoples and nations.

Nor can be a good idea to inflict punitive pains on their peoples.

Their capacity for sacrifice is well known, and hardship can only steel resolve. Indeed, their sufferings could result in unhappiness, even anger, directed against those who are seen to be the perpetrators of pain. This cannot lead to global good in the longer term.

Obviously for this body, dedicated to disarmament, it is a moment for some serious and sober reflection. Perhaps the time has now come to focus our attention on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. We are prepared to follow on this via any method on which there is a broad or emerging consensus.

Everyone knows that the great danger in an arms race such as this lies in the fact that any nuclear weaponization programme has its own secular dynamics. The need to find an equilibrium, and then a slight edge or advantage, drives parties to seek greater excellence. Deterrence become enmeshed with defence, which leads to doctrines where the nuclear and conventional aspects become inseparable. Integrated operational plans evolve. Command and control structures need to be put in place, as indeed they must be.

New sources of threat are located. Response to appropriate threat analyses is determined. The process goes on and on.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

This is not merely conjuring up scenarios, but merely being realistic.

Those are the elements that we need to resolutely address.

It is our earnest hope that South Asia will not experience such an arms race. South Asia and the Middle East are perhaps the most sensitive areas in the world, demanding global action for peace and stability.

Imperatives of objectivity dictate that in the building of various regimes, in the setting of different norms, in the deliberations about treaties, we must not only be just, and non-discriminatory and inclusive, but also seen to be so.

Most importantly, when different constituencies, cultures and value systems speak, we must not only hear it, but also listen.

Without this, mere urgings and exhortations by some on others to follow a line of action, and repeating those urgings and exhortations when these are ignored, will not bear fruit.

This will only embarrass those who make them, and those upon whom these are made.

As for Bangladesh, our own commitment to non-proliferation remains unflinching, and we will do all that is possible to work for its cause. We believe the NPT and CTBT to be the foundation stones for a safer world.

We, too, belong to the South Asian region and share deep friendship with all other countries who do.

Indeed, Bangladesh has every confidence in their commitment to peace, and in our combined capacity to cooperate towards its achievement, and in the resolution of our problems.

In fact, we are reassured by the positive statements that have emanated from the concerned leaderships since the testings.

Bangladesh will make the best endeavours to encourage such impulses, and to help with follow-up action in the spirit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to which all our regional countries belong.

As South Asians, we in Bangladesh feel that we serve a positive purpose by seeking to enhance the understanding of the international community of the sentiments of the region, so that we all are better able to work together for peace, stability and progress in the world we all share.

Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, may I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you every success? I should also extend my gratitude to your predecessor, the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic, for his tireless efforts during his tenure.

(Mr. Ziaran, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Since the Iranian Foreign Minister is going to address the Conference on Thursday 4 June 1998, for the time being I would only read into the record the statement of Iran's Foreign Ministry on the recent developments in South Asia.

> "The Islamic Republic of Iran follows with deep concern the chain of events concerning recent nuclear tests in South Asia. The current nuclear race poses a serious threat and danger to regional peace and stability - a race which is first and foremost the consequence of lack of political will and commitment on the part of the five nuclear States to heed the calls of the international community for comprehensive nuclear disarmament.
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> "Undoubtedly, the primary implication of this trend, over and above its destructive impact on world security and the environment, is to undermine the effectiveness and credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. For, in the absence of an all-encompassing programme for comprehensive nuclear disarmament, the status and future of the NPT will face great uncertainty."

Let me repeat this part because it is very important.

> "For, in the absence of an all-encompassing programme for comprehensive nuclear disarmament, the status and future of the NPT will face great uncertainty.
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> "The Islamic Republic of Iran emphatically calls upon the five nuclear States to expeditiously respond to international calls and exigencies of time to fulfil their commitments to nuclear disarmament in a time-bound framework and hence bring to a halt the continuation and expansion of this serious threat, and also invites India and Pakistan to cease nuclear tests and rivalry forthwith and join the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.
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> "The recent development underscore, once again, the imperative of serious attention to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as a step towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament, particularly in the sensitive region of the Middle East, which has been faced with the menace of the Israeli nuclear arsenal."

Mr. KUMIN (Austria): Mr. President, allow me, first of all, to bid you a warm welcome to this Conference and to congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency at this crucial moment when the CD faces new and so far unknown challenges. We place our full trust in your determined leadership to steer our ship clear of possible political fallout from recent developments and to further engage this body in concrete and substantial work.

My Ambassador has already addressed the issue of nuclear testing by India in his intervention on 14 May. Today, I would like to take the

(Mr. Kumin, Austria)

opportunity to bring to your attention a resolution adopted on 13 May by the lower chamber of the Austrian Parliament after the first series of Indian tests, which reads as follows:

"The Austrian National Council

"Strongly condemns the nuclear tests conducted by the Indian Government on 11 May 1998;

"Calls upon the Indian Government to desist from any further nuclear tests and to join the NPT and CTBT;

"Appeals to all States in the region not to engage in further aggravation of the (nuclear) arms race;

"Calls on all States in the region to contribute to the stabilizing of peaceful good-neighbourly relations and invites the Austrian Federal Government to be active in that spirit and to take any measures in pursuit of these objectives."

Let me also add that this position of the Austrian people expressed by our Parliament equally holds true for the nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan on 28 and 30 May. With regard to the detonation of five nuclear devices on Thursday 28 May, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Wolfgang Schüssel, said in a press release issued on that same day that he was deeply concerned and shocked by the nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan, which he strongly condemned. With this step by Pakistan the worst fears of the world community have sadly come true, namely, that as a consequence of the Indian tests a spiralling nuclear arms race could take place on the subcontinent. The Foreign Minister called upon India and Pakistan to immediately cease any further testing and to abstain from exercising military threats. He called on both countries to solemnly renounce nuclear tests and to declare their preparedness to sign the CTBT and to join the NPT. Our Foreign Minister went on to indicate that further steps with regard to Pakistan would be considered together with the other members of the European Union, and that the Austrian position would be conveyed in the strongest and clearest terms to the Ambassador of Pakistan in Austria by the Political Director of the Austrian Foreign Ministry. This has been done in the meantime.

India and Pakistan should commit themselves neither to assemble nuclear devices nor to deploy them on delivery vehicles, and to cease development and deployment of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads, and not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

In conclusion, my delegation also fully associates itself with the statement issued a few days ago by the European Union and the statement made earlier at this present meeting in the name of a group of countries by the Ambassador of New Zealand. We would like to emphasize, in particular, the calls upon India and Pakistan to immediately and unconditionally engage in negotiations at the CD on a fissile material cut-off treaty and to contribute to their early and successful conclusion. Such a treaty, on the basis of the

(Mr. Kumin, Austria)

Shannon report and the mandate contained therein, would be in itself an insufficient yet all the more necessary step in order to contain nuclear proliferation, and would lead us towards complete nuclear disarmament. An FMCT, and not the pursuit of nuclear options and weapons programmes, would genuinely enhance security in the region and globally, which have been profoundly threatened by the irresponsible quest for a weapon the elimination of which is our proclaimed goal and common obligation towards mankind.

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): Mr. President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and I wish you all success.

I have asked for the floor to read out the statement made on 28 May 1998 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lena Hjelm-Wallén, regarding Pakistan's nuclear-weapons test. Before doing so, I recall that Sweden is one of the many States that associates itself with the statement made this morning by the Ambassador of New Zealand. The statement of the Swedish Foreign Minister reads as follows:

> "Pakistan's test explosion must be strongly and unequivocally condemned.
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> "In spite of the international community's urgent and forceful requests Pakistan has followed India's irresponsible example and taken this dangerous step.
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> "The Pakistani nuclear test means a further escalation of the situation in the region which is already very serious. This spiral of nuclear tests seriously threatens international peace and security and must absolutely be stopped.
>
> "I urge Pakistan and India to take the necessary measures as soon as possible to reverse this extremely dangerous development. Both parties must fully consider their responsibility and realize the necessity of dialogue and the assumption of joint responsibility for peace and security in the region by peaceful means.
>
> "I also urge Pakistan and India to accede without delay and unconditionally to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
>
> "At the same time it is the responsibility of the five nuclear-weapon States to show the way by taking prompt and concrete action for intensified nuclear disarmament with the aim to achieve the complete abolition of these weapons.
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> "In today's consultations in the United Nations Security Council Sweden will raise the question of Pakistan's nuclear tests."

I request the secretariat to circulate the statement as an official document of the Conference.

Mr. ALI (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, please accept my delegation's congratulations and well wishes to you. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership, the Conference will succeed in its endeavours through the challenges that this Conference is confronted with. Through you my felicitations also go to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Syria, who had presided over the Conference and with his skills had contributed to the adoption of the decision contained in document CD/1501. My delegation welcomes this decision with the expectation that the Conference should give due support and exercise clear political will to the attainment of the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and its other agenda as outline in document CD/1484 adopted on 20 January 1998.

This second part of the 1998 session has begun under rather unusual but not altogether unanticipated circumstances with two member States of the CD taking drastic steps in conducting nuclear tests, which clearly runs counter to the world's desire to achieve nuclear disarmament. The world's security is at stake with direct implications to the South Asian subcontinent and to the world at large. My delegation is strongly supportive of all efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the recent events constitute a serious setback towards achievement of these efforts.

I am taking the floor today to bring to the attention of the Conference and to read out the press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur on 29 May 1998, following the series of underground tests conducted by Pakistan. A similar press release condemning the Indian nuclear tests was read out before this Conference on 14 May 1998.

The press statement reads as follows:

"Malaysia deplores the underground nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan on 28 May 1998. The action by Pakistan is a further setback to efforts to keep the region free of nuclear weapons and from the threat of nuclear conflicts. Malaysia calls on Pakistan to cease developing its capability to produce nuclear weapons immediately.

"Malaysia is deeply concerned over recent developments in the South Asian region, which would lead to a dangerous competition for nuclear superiority. Malaysia urges all countries concerned to refrain from such competition, exercise maximum restraint and prevent the further escalation of tension.

"The actions by countries in the South Asian region to detonate nuclear devices have undermined the efforts of the international community towards attaining a complete ban on nuclear testing and achieving the goal of nuclear non-proliferation. Malaysia is particularly disappointed that nuclear tests continue to be conducted despite the overwhelming adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

(Mr. Ali, Malaysia)

"Malaysia reiterates its strong opposition to nuclear testing and the continued possession of nuclear weapons. Malaysia urges all the nuclear-weapons States to demonstrate a stronger commitment to the goals of nuclear disarmament and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. Malaysia also calls upon all States to actively participate in international efforts aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons."

The above press release has also been submitted to the secretariat and my delegation has requested that it be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

Mr. PALIHAKKARA (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, my delegation already had occasion to congratulate you, and I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic, for the excellent contribution he made to our work, including the important decisions on the issues relevant to the very subject of today's meeting.

Sri Lanka has already expressed its deep concern about current developments in the security situation in our immediate neighbourhood of South Asia. We hope very much that, notwithstanding the prevailing tensions in the region, the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will continue to strengthen measures for practical, meaningful cooperation among them.

Cooperation requires security and peace. Sri Lanka will do all it can to help develop an ambience of security and confidence in the region and to remove the causes for anxiety as to the security situation prevalent in the region.

The security of South Asia cannot be considered in isolation. The present situation in our region reinforces the necessity for serious and sustained efforts to be made by the entire international community to achieve global nuclear disarmament, leading to total elimination of nuclear weapons, without which peace and security will continue to be in constant jeopardy everywhere.

We are happy to note that both India and Pakistan, countries with whom we share abiding friendship and understanding, have stated that they remain committed to a process of nuclear disarmament. We hope that exploratory work on a multilateral process towards that objective can be the outgrowth of the very meeting that we hold today. The fact that all of the CD members, including India and Pakistan, have agreed to hold this meeting is a significant manifestation of the willingness to constructively consider the many dimensions of the issues at hand and a way forward.

We welcome the note of restraint recently spoken of by both India and Pakistan. This is indeed essential for achieving conditions of peace and security.

(Mr. Palihakkara, Sri Lanka)

We are confident that the prevailing situation will be effectively dealt with through the mature statesmanship of the leadership of India and Pakistan.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): It is with profound regret that I asked for the floor today. Almost three weeks ago, I made a statement expressing the deep regret of the Government and the people of Japan at the tests conducted by India. Now I am obliged to do the same, but this time towards Pakistan. On 28 May, the Chief Cabinet Secretary of my Government made a statement concerning the recent nuclear tests by Pakistan.

The main points of the statement following the tests are as follows:

"It is extremely deplorable that Pakistan conducted nuclear tests on 28 May despite sincere efforts by the international community, including Japan, urging Pakistan to exercise restraint.

"These tests were conducted in defiance of the efforts of the international community to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons and therefore can never be tolerated. Japan urges Pakistan to immediately cease nuclear testing and the development of nuclear weapons. It also reiterates its demand that India and Pakistan accede to the NPT and the CTBT and not commence a dangerous nuclear arms race.

"The Government of Japan has decided to take the following measures, taking into account the principles of its Official Development Assistance Charter. First, grant aid for new projects will be frozen, except in cases of emergency and humanitarian aid and grant assistance for grass-roots projects. Second, yen loans to Pakistan for new projects will also be frozen. Third, the Government will cautiously examine loan programmes to Pakistan by international financial institutions.

"Japan is also determined to maintain strict control of the transfer to Pakistan of items and technologies related to weapons of mass destruction."

Following Pakistan's further nuclear test on 30 May, the Chief Cabinet Secretary issued a statement whose main points read as follows:

"Japan regards most seriously the fact that Pakistan went ahead with the second testing, despite strong criticism from Japan and other members of the international community of its nuclear testing on 28 May, and strongly protests these tests.

"The repeated nuclear testing by Pakistan is a most dangerous action which heightens tensions in the region and threatens to undermine the foundations of the non-proliferation regime. Japan in no way can condone this action.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

"Japan strongly urges that Pakistan earnestly heed the voice of the international community which calls upon it to discontinue nuclear testing and the development of nuclear weapons as well as to accede to the NPT and the CTBT."

Let me point out that the measures Japan has decided to take in response to Pakistan's nuclear tests correspond with the measures taken in response to India's tests about three weeks ago.

We are particularly dismayed by the fact that Pakistan's tests were conducted despite Japan's utmost efforts to convince Pakistan to exercise restraint in the cause of world peace and stability. Prime Minister Hashimoto sent his special envoy to Islamabad with a letter and directly called Prime Minister Sharif to request restraint.

Through these contacts, the Government of Japan tried to send the Pakistani Government a clear message concerning the implications of Pakistan's choices. It was with regret and pain that we learned Pakistan had made the wrong decision and that we had to impose the measures referred to earlier.

The international community is now facing a new and dangerous situation arising in South Asia as a result of the series of nuclear tests initiated by India and followed by Pakistan. The acts of provocation and retaliation that we have witnessed in three short weeks have undoubtedly weakened rather than strengthened the security of all States in the region and beyond.

The challenge with which the international community at large, and the disarmament community in particular, are confronted is the greatest since the nuclear non-proliferation regime was successfully instituted nearly 30 years ago.

Yes, the regime for which we worked so hard to create is now under strain. But our task remains to strengthen it by rolling back the adverse force unleashed by the recent acts of India and Pakistan. Let me emphasize that the number of States parties to the NPT is edging towards 187 and these States are firmly behind the task of strengthening the regime. To them, nuclear proliferation is simply unacceptable. But in order for this 187-nation contingent of peace to succeed, it is imperative for them to unite, particularly the five nuclear-weapons States parties who have special responsibilities under the Treaty, and they should neither be complacent nor take the NPT for granted.

How the 187 States respond to the challenge inherent in the nuclear non-proliferation regime itself will determine whether the Indian/Pakistani episodes develop into a real crisis or into a more consolidated nuclear non-proliferation regime.

It is with this awareness in mind that Japan calls upon both India and Pakistan to accede unconditionally and without delay to the NPT and to the CTBT, and to engage in negotiations to conclude a ban on the production of fissile materials.

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

At this critical juncture, I would like to urge India and Pakistan to recognize their responsibilities as members of the international community and to reconsider their nuclear-weapon programmes for the sake of their people and for the people of the world.

Mr. SELEBI (South Africa): Mr. President, my delegation extends its congratulations to you on your assumption of the office of President of the Conference on Disarmament at this critical juncture for international peace and security. I also want to thank most heartily your predecessor, the distinguished representative and Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic, for the outstanding work that he has done.

South Africa has associated itself with the joint statement on the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan read by the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand today. We have associated ourselves to the statement despite its weakness in that it does not, in our view, adequately address and emphasize the importance of nuclear disarmament, which has become even more critical given the recent developments, which can only be seen as a setback to our common goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. I will be addressing this issue later in my statement in greater detail.

The Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa has issued a number of statements as a consequence of the nuclear-test explosions carried out by Pakistan. On 28 May 1998, they issued the following statement:

> "South Africa is deeply concerned at the Pakistani nuclear tests.
>
> "The South African Government has noted with deep concern the reported nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan this morning. South Africa has appealed for restraint from Pakistan following the recent tests by India.
>
> "As a matter of principle, South Africa opposes all nuclear tests since they do not contribute to promoting world peace and security. South Africa believes that security is provided by nuclear disarmament rather than by nuclear proliferation.
>
> "South Africa repeats the hope that these tests do not result in an arms race in South Asia."

And on 30 May, they issued the following statement in response to further tests:

> "South Africa has noted with deepening concern the two further nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan on 30 May 1998.
>
> "South Africa is gravely disappointed at this development and restates its well-known position that it opposes and will continue to oppose all nuclear tests irrespective of source.

(Mr. Selebi, South Africa)

"South Africa holds firm to the view that world security is derived from nuclear disarmament and not nuclear proliferation.

"An escalating arms race in South Asia remains of deep concern to South Africa."

The developments in South Asia and the nuclear-test explosions conducted by India and Pakistan have signalled the recommencement of the nuclear arms race, which the international community had hoped had been consigned to the past with the end of the cold war. The South African Government believes that these developments have made it even more imperative that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should now actively, and with determination, address the issue of nuclear disarmament and the re-emergence of a nuclear arms race. It is my Government's view that this should be done through the establishment of an ad hoc committee for nuclear disarmament in the CD which would signal the importance which this Conference attaches to the issue. The South African delegation submitted a mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee for nuclear disarmament at the first meeting of our 1998 session, which reads:

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to deliberate upon practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons as well as to identify if and when one or more such steps should be the subject of negotiations in the Conference.

"In discharging its function, the ad hoc committee will take into account existing proposals and views, as well as future initiatives on nuclear disarmament."

We are convinced that this mandate is now even more appropriate given the developments in South Asia, and that the Conference must seek to deliberate upon the practical steps required for systematic and progressive efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons, identifying if and when one or more such steps should be the subject of negotiations in the CD, as a matter of urgency.

Consequently, Mr. President, we call upon you to actively and without delay pursue the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the consultations which were assigned to you in decision CD/1501 and on the basis of the statement contained in CD/1500, both of which were adopted on 26 March 1998. The international community is looking to this Conference, and to you as its President, to take concrete action to address this most serious issue. With the recent developments which are the focus of this debate, it cannot remain business as usual. Nuclear-weapon States, if ever there was a wake-up call, this is it. This is a call you cannot miss.

My Government also believes that the negotiations on a comprehensive fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) in this body should not be delayed any further.

Mr. MARTINEZ MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all allow me to extend greetings to you and welcome you to the task of leading the work of this Conference on Disarmament, which is once again at a crossroads. My delegation wishes to assure you of its support and trust. It is full of hope that this Conference will be able to resume its work promptly in a fruitful manner, despite the fact that the international circumstances in which it is now operating are more complex. This fact must serve as a spur to tackle these circumstances rather than an obstacle added to the problems that have adversely affected it in the recent past. My appreciation and esteem also go to the excellent and fruitful work carried out by your predecessor as President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Through its statement today, my delegation wishes to place on record its great concern at the escalation of events that has been occurring in South Asia with the repetition of acts that heighten the tensions which already existed in the area and in addition create a hotbed of danger for world peace. This approach can only, to say the least, increase the difficulties involved in dealing peacefully and through dialogue with the underlying causes of the existing conflicts in the area. The Spanish Government has been paying the greatest attention to a situation that is increasingly serious. The reaction of the Spanish authorities once again falls in the framework of the statement made by the presidency of the European Union when the new nuclear tests were carried out by Pakistan. My delegation is also amongst those that support and wish to be associated with the substance of the statement that has just been read by the Ambassador of New Zealand.

Spain, which deeply regretted the nuclear tests carried out recently by India, is once again compelled to express identical sentiments in response to the escalation caused by the subsequent testing carried out by Pakistan. My delegation wishes to express its resolute condemnation of the repeated actions that run counter to the clearly expressed will of the international community as far as the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is concerned and constitute a very serious threat to peace and security at the regional and world levels. The situation that has come about makes it still more vitally necessary for India and Pakistan to accede promptly to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and immediately join in the process of implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Spain's earnest appeal along these lines is addressed to them. India and Pakistan and the other States in the region are also urged to refrain from any further steps that might heighten the tensions that have already been created. The response must involve dialogue, a dialogue which by creating confidence and avoiding confrontation, will seek a solution to the problems that have created conflicts in the area, their exacerbation currently, and their potential worsening in the future.

My delegation wishes in turn to place on record once again its full support for a start to negotiations by the Conference on Disarmament as soon as possible for a treaty on the cessation of the production of fissile material. My delegation, which has always supported this option, continues to believe that this is the necessary and logical step following from the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

Mr. PEETERS (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to extend to you my warmest congratulations on the occasion of your taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of the full support of my delegation during your term of office.

It is again with regret that I must take the floor today. In our statement of 14 May, following the nuclear tests carried out by India, we informed the Conference on Disarmament of our consternation and disappointment. Belgium is deeply disappointed that Pakistan decided, at a critical time, to carry out underground nuclear tests and did not respond to the appeal of the international community by giving up such tests. The Pakistani nuclear tests endanger stability and security that were already fragile in the region and heighten the risks of a further escalation that could have serious economic and political consequences. Belgium therefore appeals urgently to India and Pakistan to embark on a dialogue that would re-establish stability and security in the region. Belgium reiterates its appeal made in this Conference on 14 May and calls on the Governments of both India and Pakistan to ensure that these countries accede as soon as possible to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the treaty comprehensively banning nuclear testing. Accession to the two above-mentioned treaties by these two countries would be a major contribution to restoring calm to the region. My delegation also appeals urgently to this Conference to embark without delay on substantive negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material.

Mr. JAKUBOWSKI (Poland): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Not all representatives have the good fortune of presiding over "the best club in Geneva" some time during their tenure - if at all. Yours is a rare and enviable case of the helm of the CD being taken right at the beginning of your mission.

I am confident that at this time of looming threats to world peace, the CD can only benefit from your enthusiasm, experience and unspoilt view of disarmament objectives which you bring to the presidency. As a representative of Turkey, a country with which Poland has been linked by a long history of mutual relations, you can rely on my and my delegation's support and cooperation.

I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessors, the distinguished representatives of Sweden, Switzerland and the Syrian Arab Republic, for their indefatigable and fruitful efforts to launch the CD work on a constructive and productive course.

My greetings go also to the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference, His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail.

Let me add the Polish voice to all those who have spoken highly of the statement by New Zealand. We have associated Poland with this statement with satisfaction.

(Mr. Jakubowski, Poland)

In connection with the underground nuclear test explosions carried out by Pakistan, I should like to read out a statement issued last Thursday, 28 May 1998, by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In an unofficial translation, it reads as follows:

> "Poland has taken note with grave concern of the underground nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan. We strongly deplore the aggravating situation in the South Asian region which can have extremely serious consequences for international security. Poland resolutely opposes the ongoing escalation of the nuclear arms race with all its incalculable effects on that security.
>
> "We are strongly convinced that the resolution of all regional tensions and conflicts should be sought through dialogue as well as bilateral and plurilateral negotiations, with due regard for international security and the legitimate right of the international community to coexist in peace.
>
> "Addressing an appeal to the two States in South Asia and bearing in mind the statement of the President of the United Nation Security Council, Poland calls on Pakistan and India to forswear further tests and to accede to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty without delay."

I should like to request that the statement of the polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, let me, at the outset, congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the CD presidency at this crucial historical moment, which may have serious implications for disarmament trends and international security. Being a member of the Presidential troika, my delegation is also ready to share responsibility for the implementation of the difficult task in promoting dialogue on agenda Item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

I will be brief. I have taken the floor to confirm that Ukraine fully associates itself with the joint statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand on behalf of several countries, including mine. Besides, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, in its statement issued on 28 May 1998, expressed our position with regard to Pakistani nuclear tests:

> "As in the case of Indian nuclear tests, Ukraine condemn this step made by Pakistan, and calls upon both countries to show restraint and responsibility in bilateral relations, this being in conformity with the interests of preserving peace and stability in South Asia and in the world as a whole."

We have already asked the secretariat to register the statement of the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine as an official CD document.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Some two weeks ago Australia took the floor in this forum to express its resolute opposition to any nuclear testing by any State, and its profound disappointment with, and condemnation of, the nuclear tests conducted by India.

The Australian Government acted swiftly and decisively to register its concern with the Indian Government's actions, to announce a series of measures Australia had taken in response to those actions, and to send a message to other nations with possible nuclear aspirations about the consequences of such action.

Subsequent events in South Asia provide cause for great alarm. The Australian Government strongly condemns Pakistan's nuclear tests. They were conducted despite the strong international condemnation of India's tests and despite pleas for restraint from Australia and other Governments.

Pakistan's decision to ignore the inevitable implications of its actions for global and regional security reveals that its professed desire to end the nuclear weapons era, like that of the Government of India, is no more than a deception.

A South Asian arms race can only exacerbate existing regional tensions and have serious implications for global security arrangements. The direct threats presented by recent tests to the credibility and existence of the international regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons must cease immediately.

The South Asian nuclear tests, and the urgent need to repair the potential damage of this to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to regional and international peace and security, have given the commencement of negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty an even greater urgency and relevance for the international community. For Australia and others with an interest in reducing South Asian regional tension and proliferation pressures, a fissile material cut-off treaty would provide a measure of transparency about the nuclear capabilities and intentions of India and Pakistan, which would act as a confidence-building measure between these two States and for others within their strategic environment.

As set out in the statement read out at the beginning of this plenary session by New Zealand Ambassador Pearson, a statement with which Australia readily associates itself, we call upon India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty without conditions, accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and participate in negotiations in this Conference to achieve a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The international community cannot let India and Pakistan's actions pass without a strong and substantive response. I outlined in my statement of 14 May the measures we have taken in response to Indian testing.

Australia decided on 29 May to take the following bilateral measures in response to the test conducted by Pakistan: to recall for consultations our

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

High Commissioner in Islamabad; to suspend bilateral defence relations; to suspend non-humanitarian aid; to suspend ministerial and senior official visits; and to terminate the then visit of the Pakistani parliamentary delegation in Australia at the time of the tests.

I will also seek to have the official statements made by my Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in response to Pakistan's nuclear tests circulated as official documents of the Conference.

Lastly, I reiterate Australia's deep disappointment over, and condemnation of, the ill-advised course of action chosen by both India and Pakistan. We urge them to cease tests and desist from further destabilizing actions such as the development and testing of nuclear weapon delivery systems. We urge other States to continue vigorously to encourage India and Pakistan to join the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and to pursue the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and is confident that under your leadership the CD will make smooth progress. The Chinese delegation will give you its full cooperation. My delegation would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Syria, for his outstanding work.

The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made a moment ago by some members of the CD. It can support most of the points made, but has reservations about certain formulations. Concretely, for example, we feel that the countries concerned should not only immediately and unconditionally sign the CTBT but should also unconditionally accede to the NPT. China has always advocated the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and is opposed to any form of nuclear weapon proliferation. Hence we cannot but express our deep regret at the nuclear tests in South Asia, though Pakistan carried out its own nuclear tests in response to those by India.

China is deeply worried and concerned about the grave situation in South Asia caused by the recent nuclear-test explosions. This development runs counter to international efforts to prevent nuclear weapon proliferation and ban nuclear tests and has made an already complex and difficult regional situation to a more unstable and perilous one. It also has a negative impact on world peace and security, and this is the last thing we would like to see.

The whole world can bear witness: the current situation in South Asia was triggered by India. In defiance of world opinion, India took the lead in blatantly conducting nuclear tests and set off a nuclear test race for which it must inescapably bear the major responsibility.

We urge countries in South Asia to exercise maximum restraint, refrain from any further action that might make the situation worse, undertake not to conduct any further nuclear tests, renounce nuclear weapon development programmes and sign the CTBT and accede to the NPT immediately and

(Mr. Li, China)

unconditionally. We urge the countries concerned, in their own long-term interests and for regional and world peace and security, to discuss and negotiate solutions to their disputes and differences so as to ease the tension and confrontation in South Asia and restore and maintain stability in the region.

Mr. LEFER (Brazil): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, may I extend to you warmest congratulations on your assumption of the incumbency and assure you of my own, as well as my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your duties which, no doubt, will be facilitated in view of your diplomatic experience and skill? Let me also pay tribute to your predecessors for their perseverance and achievements.

On 28 and 30 May 1998, the Government of Brazil issued statements in which it deplored and expressed deep regret and concern at the decision of the Pakistani Government to conduct nuclear tests. On those occasions, Brazil reiterated its conviction that such tests put the nuclear non-proliferation regime at risk; urged Pakistan and India to adhere to the Comprehensive nuclear Test-Ban Treaty; and, concerned with the possibility of an escalating nuclear arms race in the region, appealed to both countries for maximum restraint. The Brazilian Government also reaffirmed its unshakable conviction that the way to peace and development can only be found through cooperation and integration, and expressed the opinion that these events underscore the urgency and necessity of measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Brazil has joined the many other States in subscribing to the declaration read out by New Zealand early this morning. We did so in order to further underline our political concern with the dangerous situation created by nuclear testing in South Asia, and despite the declaration's limited reference to global nuclear disarmament, which is a point that my delegation considers of highest priority.

Brazil is convinced that renouncing the development and possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and adopting full transparency, constitute the best way of assuring regional and global peace and security. The path followed and the results achieved by Brazil and Argentina in this respect speak for themselves.

The nuclear tests in South Asia are events of great political impact and meaning, whose full implications on a worldwide scale are yet to be known. Risk assessment and self-restraint considerations have, up to now, precariously avoided nuclear holocaust. They had until recently also preserved the unity of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, despite the latter's imbalances and the questions raised by the continued existence of nuclear weapons. The events of the last few weeks put this unity to the test by bringing the specific logic of regional tensions to a wider international plain. This new situation clearly calls for a change in attitudes.

In this connection, Brazil once more emphasizes the need for clear, unambiguous and binding commitments to a phased programme for achieving the

(Mr. Lefer, Brazil)

objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons on the part of all States possessing these weapons as the best guarantee against nuclear proliferation. We stress the timeliness and urgency of this Conference engaging in serious negotiations towards the attainment of such objectives and therefore call upon all members of the Conference to allow it forthwith to deal substantively with agenda Item 1.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I offer you my delegation's congratulations, as I am speaking for the first time since you took the Chair, and my cooperation in your important duties. I also wish to express the appreciation of the Mexican delegation to your predecessors, the Ambassadors of Sweden, Switzerland and Syria, thanks to whose tireless efforts we succeeded in agreeing a programme of work.

My delegation associated itself with the statement made today, by the Ambassador of New Zealand on behalf of a number of delegations, as an expression of the concern we share, but we would have preferred the statement to place emphasis on our need to undertake, at the universal multilateral level specific measures designed to re-establish the credibility and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime. These measures include the urgent establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation has requested the distribution as an official document of a communiqué which my Government issued on 28 May 1998, and which I would now like to read into the record:

> "The Government of Mexico condemns and deplores the nuclear-weapon tests carried out today by the Government of Pakistan, and expresses its most serious concern at the initiation of a nuclear arms race in South Asia.
>
> "The carrying out of nuclear-weapon tests undermines and jeopardizes the international non-proliferation regime governing these weapons, which is indispensable to peace and world security, since the risk that they may come to be used increases in direct proportion to their spread, their build-up and their technological improvement. In turn, the use of nuclear weapons must be avoided at all costs, not only in view of the indiscriminate, permanent and catastrophic damage they would cause, but because they could lead to the involvement of other nuclear-weapons States in an escalation which could endanger the very survival of mankind.
>
> "An effective non-proliferation regime for nuclear weapons must necessarily lead to nuclear disarmament. But the attainment of a nuclear-weapon-free world is impossible in a context of proliferation of such weapons in any of its aspects.
>
> "Mexico calls on India and Pakistan to immediately halt their nuclear-weapon tests and the development and accumulation of delivery

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

vehicles, which exacerbate tension in their region, reduce security at the international level and hamper efforts designed to lessen the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

"Mexico also appeals to all States to put an immediate halt to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, and to begin urgent negotiations on an unequivocal and binding commitment to the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons through a broad and phased programme for the gradual and progressive reduction of nuclear stockpiles and delivery systems leading to their complete and final elimination in specific stages."

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): Mr. President, we join others in congratulating you upon your assumption of the presidency and assure you of the full support of the Norwegian delegation. The Norwegian delegation would also like to put on record that we fully associate ourselves with the statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of New Zealand.

Norway condemns the nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan. The Norwegian Government had hoped that Pakistan would show constructive restraint and refrain from following India's unacceptable behaviour. Pakistan's decision to demonstrate strength in response to India's tests is a most serious setback to international non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts.

Norway has reacted strongly to India's nuclear tests. We have condemned the Indian tests, and discontinued development assistance to India. Norway will react accordingly to Pakistan's tests.

Norway urges Pakistan and India to work together to restore stability in the region, to halt all nuclear tests, and to sign and ratify the NPT and the CTBT without conditions and without delay. Only through peaceful dialogue and steps to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation can the security challenges of the region be solved.

The possession, threat of use or use of nuclear weapons is no solution for any country to the challenges and problems they face in their political dealings with other countries. Instead, we must seek to create a security environment in which the nuclear deterrent becomes obsolete or irrelevant. India and Pakistan should take the lead in such efforts instead of competing for leadership in a regional nuclear arms race. We all have a responsibility to ensure that the efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and reduce their role in international politics are continued.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me, in turn to extend to you my sincere congratulations on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, and allow me also to say how much confidence my country has in you and in your country in carrying out these responsibilities.

My country wishes to be fully associated with the statement made today by the Ambassador of New Zealand. It wishes to recall that, on hearing the

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

announcement of the Pakistani tests on 28 and 30 May, France expressed its reaction unambiguously. It regretted that Pakistan had not heeded the pleas for restraint addressed to it. France deplored and condemned these tests, which run counter to world efforts to stem nuclear proliferation and the very broad support given by the international community to the CTBT. It urged Pakistan to end these tests once and for all.

In passing this judgement and condemning both the Indian and the Pakistani tests, France is bearing in mind the sequence of events that led to the present situation.

These highly regrettable developments prompt my delegation to insist now, in this room, that India and Pakistan should clearly announce that they renounce nuclear tests once and for all. France also reiterates its appeal to Pakistan and India to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty promptly and unconditionally and to participate in the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes in the Conference. In so doing, France restates its attachment to the principles and provisions of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, I am pleased to see you, the representative of our close ally, Turkey, in the Chair, and I offer you the full support of my delegation during your presidency.

I have asked for the floor today to address the serious international security situation created by India's series of nuclear-weapons tests, followed by Pakistan's series of nuclear-weapons tests. In that context, I recall my statement of 13 May regarding India's nuclear tests and President Clinton's remarks, contained in document CD/1505. My delegation also associates itself with the remarks made today by the distinguished representative of New Zealand on behalf of a number of States.

President Clinton has addressed the subject of nuclear testing by Pakistan on two occasions, correlating with each of the series of nuclear tests by Pakistan. I would like to read for the record his remarks.

On 28 May, President Clinton said:

> "Because of the explosion of the nuclear test this morning by the Government of Pakistan, I would like to make a brief statement about the first, since this is my only opportunity to communicate with the media and the American people on that issue.
>
> "First, I deplore the decision. By failing to exercise restraint and responding to the Indian test, Pakistan lost a truly priceless opportunity to strengthen its own security, to improve its political standing in the eyes of the world.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

"And although Pakistan was not the first to test, two wrongs don't make a right. I have made it clear to the leaders of Pakistan that we have no choice but to impose sanctions pursuant to the Glenn amendment as is required by law.

"Now, I want to say again: it is now more urgent than its was yesterday that both Pakistan and India renounce further tests, sign the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, and take decisive steps to reduce tensions in South Asia and reverse the dangerous arms race.

"I cannot believe that we are about to start the twenty-first century by having the Indian subcontinent repeat the worst mistakes of the twentieth century when we know it is not necessary to peace and security, to prosperity, to national greatness or personal fulfilment. And I hope that the determined efforts of the United States and our allies will be successful in helping the parties who must themselves decide how to define their future to defuse tensions and avoid further errors."

On 28 May, White House spokesman Mike McCurry acknowledged that Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in discussions with President Clinton, "was honest" in describing the pressures and the difficulties Prime Minister Sharif faced in arriving at his decision. India, on the other hand, McCurry remarked, had not dealt honestly with the United States about its nuclear test plans.

On 30 May, following further testing by Pakistan, President Clinton made the following statement:

"The United States condemns today's second round of nuclear tests by Pakistan. These tests can only serve to increase tensions in an already volatile region. With their recent tests, Pakistan and India are contributing to a self-defeating cycle of escalation that does not add to the security of either country. Both India and Pakistan need to renounce further nuclear and missile testing immediately and take decisive steps to reverse this dangerous arms race.

"I will continue to work with leaders throughout the international community to reduce tensions in South Asia, to preserve the global consensus on non-proliferation.

"I call on India and Pakistan to resume their direct dialogue, to sign the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty immediately and without conditions to reverse the arms race there, and to join the clear international consensus in support of non-proliferation."

Finally, on 30 May, the President issued Presidential Determination No. 98-25, on the subject of "Sanctions against Pakistan for detonation of a nuclear explosive device". It is addressed to the Secretary of State and reads as follows:

(Mr. Grey, United States)

"In accordance with section 102 (b) (1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby determine that Pakistan, a non-nuclear-weapon State, detonated a nuclear explosive device on May 28, 1998. The relevant agencies and instrumentalities of the United States Government are hereby directed to take the necessary actions to impose the sanctions described in section 102 (b) (2) of that Act.

"You [the Secretary of State] are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the Federal Register."

These statements speak for themselves. I ask that the texts of President Clinton's remarks and the Presidential Determination be circulated together as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. ZIMONYI (Hungary): My Ambassador requested me to make the following statement.

Allow us, first of all, Mr. President, to join others in congratulating you, on behalf of the Hungarian delegation, on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. We are pleased to see you, a representative of a country with which Hungary maintains historic ties of close friendship. We also wish to extend our appreciation to the distinguished Ambassador of Syria for the effective manner in which he conducted the work of this Conference during his tenure.

I have asked for the floor for the purpose of fully associating the Hungarian delegation with the statement made by Ambassador Pearson of New Zealand earlier this morning, and also to draw your attention to a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary regarding the nuclear-test explosions carried out by Pakistan. The Hungarian authorities, as in the case of the Indian tests, reacted immediately to the events. The statement issued on 28 May reads as follows:

"The Hungarian Government has learned with regret that despite the repeated warnings by the international community, on 28 May 1998, following nuclear tests with a military purpose by India on 11 and 13 May, Pakistan too carried out nuclear tests. The Hungarian Government is increasingly concerned that the decision of Indian and Pakistan will launch a nuclear arms build-up in the region and prevent the full implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Hungary considers the maintenance of peace and stability in South Asia, which are seriously threatened by these steps, important.

"As Hungary is an associated member of the European Union, the Hungarian Government will consult with the presidency of the European Union and the member States of the EU on the current situation and possible further steps."

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of Egypt, I would like to encourage you to pursue the efforts you are making to invigorate the work of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly the priority issue of nuclear disarmament. The events of recent days have proven the importance of the message contained in the statement I made on behalf of the Egyptian delegation at the last meeting on 28 May 1998, namely, that the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime is on probation and we must take serious measures to restore the credibility of this regime through its implementation on a worldwide scale and in a just and even-handed manner.

I have asked for the floor today to make some comments regarding the statement made at this meeting by the Ambassador of New Zealand on behalf of Australia and other member States. The delegation of Egypt fully agrees with the position adopted in that statement regarding the condemnation of all nuclear tests and considers these events contrary to the international consensus banning tests of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. However, we believe that the international demand that States should immediately and unconditionally sign and ratify the CTBT and accede to the NPT cannot be confined to India and Pakistan alone in view of their recent engagement in nuclear tests, as this demand must extend to all countries that have not acceded to those two treaties and in particular to those possessing nuclear capabilities and, more specifically, to Israel, which should, without further delay, accede to the NPT and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive regime of IAEA safeguards in order to ensure that the Middle Eastern region will not be exposed to the dangers of nuclear tests or a nuclear catastrophe. In particular, paragraph 8 of the statement to which I am referring calls upon both India and Pakistan to accede without delay to the NPT. This is a selective and defective approach. If these two countries accede to the NPT, would the NPT become universal and would the threat posed by the nuclear arsenal of which Israel is reported to be in possession be dispelled? These questions need to be answered.

Nuclear tests are actually serious developments which affect and threaten the credibility of the NPT and the international non-proliferation regime, so there is no scope for indulgence in this regard. However, the crux of the matter is the prohibition of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. The mere possession of nuclear weapons and their diffusion to countries other than the five recognized nuclear-weapon States constitutes one of the principal threats facing mankind, and the statement to which I referred should not have disregarded this fact, because those reported to possess the sophisticated technologies needed to conduct tests, including non-explosive tests of nuclear weapons should in no way be absolved of responsibility, as these tests contribute to the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. Hence, we reaffirm the need for the immediate establishment, within the CD, of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to begin negotiations on a programme of work for the elimination of nuclear weapons and on a treaty banning the production of fissile material that could be used in the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in conformity with the mandate proposed by the Egyptian delegation in order to

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

preserve the credibility of the NPT and ensure its effectiveness. Finally, attempts to circumvent the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and apply them selectively entail serious consequences.

I wish to emphasize, in particular, the need to make every effort to honour the commitment made in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as a vital step towards the creation of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the proposal made by President Mubarak in 1990. The intransigence that was recently shown in the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference is one of the factors that are threatening the entire non-proliferation regime.

Mr. BALBONI ACQUA (Italy) (translated from French): Mr. President, on the occasion of my first statement under your leadership, I should like, on my own behalf and on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on taking the Chair. I am very pleased to see you guiding this assembly as a representative of a country with which Italy has maintained close links of friendship for centuries. I am certain that the prestige and the international role of your country, along with your recognized abilities, will be useful in successfully conducting our work, particularly under current circumstances.

The Italian delegation shares and fully supports the positions expressed by the European Union. We should like to stress certain points. Just two weeks after we took the floor following the Indian nuclear tests, we find ourselves once again reacting to similar tests conducted this time by another State of the region - Pakistan. It was with profound regret and great concern that Italy learned of the decision of the Pakistani Government to become involved in the deplorable spiral of the nuclear arms race, despite the appeals for moderation addressed to it by the international community.

Nuclear tests challenge the consistent efforts made by the international community to promote non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament as well as arms control, and they can only be condemned with the greatest firmness.

Bearing in mind the further aggravation of tension, Italy hopes that India and Pakistan will behave responsibly towards the international community as a whole, and will start by making every effort to open up a dialogue without delay in the region which could lead them to establish constructive relations. We appeal to them vigorously to act in keeping with their own statements and to put an end to these tests once and for all, and subsequently to accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Lastly, we urge them to refrain from any deployment of nuclear weapons and to halt the race towards the development of their respective missile arsenals.

Mr. RUIZ BLANCO (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Once again Colombia must deplore the carrying out of nuclear tests, whatever their nature, including those recently carried out by Pakistan and before that by

(Mr. Ruiz Blanco, Colombia)

India, because of their serious implications for peace and international security, and because of the enormous damage they cause to the environment and human health.

Because it considers that an arms race in South-East Asia is an additional factor for instability and does not help solve the major conflicts that exist, Colombia would like to urge the parties involved to seek agreements through dialogue and direct negotiation, with the help of the international community if it is considered necessary.

Colombia is once again compelled to demand a change of attitude in the nuclear-weapon States towards postures that are more constructive and in keeping with the commitments entered into for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. A token of this renewed commitment could be the establishment, within the Conference on Disarmament, of an ad hoc committee that would embark on negotiations straight away on a gradual programme of nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame, as advocated by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at its recent meeting in Cartagena.

The Conference on Disarmament cannot continue to deplore these events without taking genuinely effective steps that would lead to the ideal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Please be assured of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation.

My delegation wishes to join the previous speakers in deeply deploring the nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan on 28 and 30 May. In this regard, I would like to refer to the statement issued by our Foreign Ministry. It reads as follows:

> "The Government of the Republic of Korea deeply regrets that Pakistan conducted nuclear tests on 28 May 1998 in spite of the earnest appeal of the international community not to proceed with such testing. We strongly urge both Pakistan and India to immediately declare that they will permanently cease further nuclear testing and to refrain from further developing their nuclear-weapons programme. We also call upon India and Pakistan to unconditionally accede to the NPT and the CTBT without further delay."

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): In addition to associating myself with the statement made at the opening of the meeting by the distinguished representative of New Zealand, I have been asked to bring to the attention of the Conference on Disarmament the following statement by the United Kingdom presidency of the European Union on 28 May.

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

"The European Union is dismayed and disappointed at the news of a nuclear test by Pakistan. As with India's nuclear tests, the European Union condemns this action which runs counter to the will expressed by 149 signatories to the CTBT to cease nuclear testing, and to efforts to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. India's nuclear tests have undermined the stability of the region. Pakistan's nuclear test has made the situation worse.

"Following the nuclear tests by India, the EU made clear to Pakistan that a nuclear test by Pakistan would damage Pakistan's security environment. The EU had therefore strongly urged the Pakistan Government to exercise the maximum restraint and very much regrets that it has not done so.

"The European Union remains fully committed to the implementation of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty which is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundations for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. It has a strong interest in the peace and stability of South Asia, and is deeply concerned about the threat posed to this by nuclear and missile proliferation. We urge Pakistan, along with other States in the region to refrain from further tests and the deployment of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles. In particular we urge Pakistan and India: to sign the CTBT and move to ratify it; to contribute actively from now on towards opening negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons; to exert stringent controls over export of material, equipment and technology controlled under the Nuclear Suppliers Group Trigger and Dual-Use Lists and the Missile Technology Control Regime Annex; and to make a commitment neither to assemble nuclear devices nor deploy them on delivery vehicles and cease development and deployment of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

"The European Union will follow closely the evolution of the situation and will take all necessary measures should Pakistan and India not accede to and move to ratify the relevant international non-proliferation agreements, in particular the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, without conditions. We also urge Pakistan and India to engage in a dialogue which addresses the root causes of the tension between them, and try to build confidence, rather than seek confrontation."

I have also been asked to bring to the attention of the Conference the following statement by the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, in the House of Commons, on Monday 1 June 1998.

"The Government of Pakistan has declared that it carried out six nuclear tests - five on Thursday and a further one on Saturday. We recognize that the Government of Pakistan was under immense pressure to conduct these tests to match those initiated by India. But we are

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

dismayed by the decision to respond in kind and believe that the interests of Pakistan have been badly served by their decision to do so.

"Pakistan's foremost concern is its national security. That security has not been strengthened by these tests. Long-term security for Pakistan can only come from lowering tension with India and building mutual confidence within the region. It cannot be built on the unstable foundation of an arms race, which will only raise tensions. Already it can be seen from news reports from the region that the voices that have been encouraged by the recent confrontation are the voices of extremism.

"But Pakistan's loss is wider than its own reduced security. Pakistan had the chance to win international support and respect for its restraint. That opportunity has now been lost. As with India, the effect of the nuclear tests by Pakistan has been to diminish, not to enhance, the status of that country within the international community.

"We have made clear to the Government of Pakistan our dismay at their decision. The Pakistani High Commissioner was summoned to the Foreign Office the day after the tests to receive a message for his Government of our concern. I have recalled the British High Commissioner from Islamabad for consultation in London.

"We have already taken a number of measures to bring home to the Government of India the strength of our concern at their nuclear test programme. Last week we cancelled the visit by the Indian Chief of Naval Staff and we have also cancelled a forthcoming visit by their Chief of Army Staff. At the meeting last week of the General Affairs Council of the European Union, we obtained agreement to a presidency text which invited the Commission to review India's preferential trade treatment. Having taken such steps against India, I would expect comparable measures to be agreed by European partners against Pakistan for similar action by it.

"Britain's aid programme, unlike that of some other countries, is directly targeted on providing help to the poorest people in the poorest regions. We remain convinced that it would be wrong to penalize the most vulnerable citizens in either country by suspending our aid programme.

"However, no one, least of all the Governments of both countries, should understate the economic price that they will pay for isolation within the international community. Already the value of the Indian rupee has fallen. Last week the Indian Government offered US$ 1 billion of Government bonds and got no takers. In May there was a net outflow of foreign institutional investment. And last week the World Bank deferred three loans to India for energy and highways projects of almost $1 billion as a result of objections by member States including Britain.

"The adverse impact of these economic developments will make it more difficult for India or Pakistan to reduce poverty. That is why it

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

would be a tragedy if both their Governments were to persist in an arms race to acquire the most expensive of weapons, which will do nothing to help the millions of their citizens who live in poverty.

"A regional arms race would also have an impact which would stretch far beyond the region. Other States who have already demonstrated their interest in acquiring nuclear technology will be watching closely to see how the international community now responds to the precedent set by India and Pakistan. Their nuclear programmes therefore are not merely an internal matter for the two countries, but are a legitimate matter of concern for the world.

"At the suggestion of the United States, the permanent five members of the Security Council will meet on Thursday in Geneva to discuss the security implications of the nuclear test programmes and the heightened tension in the region. As President of the G8, Britain has called a meeting of their Foreign Ministers in London next week. That meeting will coordinate the response of the leading economies to the nuclear test programmes and how we can best promote dialogue with India and Pakistan and between India and Pakistan. There must be two strategic objectives in our dialogue with those countries.

"First, we must press India and Pakistan to sign up to the global regime against nuclear proliferation. The best way to reduce tension in the region would be for both India and Pakistan now to sign up to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, and to join in the negotiations at Geneva without conditions and to halt the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Neither their interests, nor those of any other country in the world, are served by encouraging the spread of nuclear weapons.

"The second objective must be to tackle the roots of the tension between both countries. There needs to be a meaningful dialogue between India and Pakistan over the issues that at present threaten stability in the region. Their security would be much better promoted by confidence-building measures than by nuclear testing programmes.

"The balance which we must seek in our approach to this issue is to confront firmly the dangers of nuclear proliferation, but without seeking confrontation with the people of India or Pakistan. Britain has a long history of close ties with both countries and millions of people in Britain have community links with relatives throughout the subcontinent. Britain therefore does not voice its dismay at the recent nuclear tests out of hostility. On the contrary, it is as a friend of both countries that Britain is appalled at the risks and costs to the peoples of the subcontinent from a nuclear arms race. I ask the whole House to show our united resolve in condemning the nuclear tests and in calling for the Governments of both India and Pakistan to stop testing and to start talking."

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. I believe that under your firm guidance we shall make the most effective use of the time allocated to us for work at the beginning of this part of the session. You can count on the support and cooperation of my delegation. I should like to express my gratitude to your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Syria, for the work he accomplished.

In connection with the issue being discussed at this plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the Russian Federation has associated itself with the joint statement read out here by the Ambassador of New Zealand. In turn I should like to read out a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 28 May.

> "The Russian Federation expresses the deepest concern at the testing of nuclear devices by Pakistan on 28 May 1998. This action was taken despite urgent appeals by the world community to Islamabad to display restraint and not to follow the principle of 'an eye for an eye' in response to the nuclear explosions carried out by India on 11 and 13 May 1998.
>
> "It is to be regretted that the Pakistani leaders were unable to control their emotions and demonstrate circumspection and prudence at an extremely fateful moment. The confrontation and rivalry which have continued between India and Pakistan for many years have now acquired a completely new nuclear dimension which is highly dangerous for mankind as a whole. A real threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons around the planet is emerging.
>
> "Russia considers that the international non-proliferation regime should become universal in nature through its extension to cover all States without exception. It once again urgently appeals to Pakistan, as well as to India, to heed the voice of the world community, renounce further testing and accede without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty."

The new tests conducted by Pakistan on 30 May merely confirm the reasons for our concern.

We would be grateful if this statement could be distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I am asking for the floor for the first time since your arrival in Geneva and your designation as President of the CD, allow me to express to you the warm congratulations and best wishes of the Chilean delegation. We would also like to congratulate the Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic on his excellent work as our previous President.

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

Unfortunately, today's meeting, like the last one we held is again an unhappy occasion as we meet in an atmosphere of concern and dread. The Indian nuclear tests have been followed by the Pakistani tests. With your permission, Sir, I will read the statement issued by the Government of Chile on 28 May on the Pakistani tests, which closely follows its previous statement of 14 May on the Indian tests.

"The Government of Chile expresses its most forceful rejection and condemnation of the nuclear explosions carried out early this morning by the Government of Pakistan. They constitute a further threat to international peace and security and represent a backward step vis-à-vis nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

"At the same time, the Government of Chile expresses its concern at the destabilizing effect of these actions for South Asia.

"In addition, these explosions violate the agreements and declarations of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which Pakistan is a member, as reaffirmed at the Non-Aligned ministerial meeting held in Cartagena, between 18 and 20 May this year.

"Chile reiterates its steadfast policy of rejection and condemnation of nuclear explosions carried out by any member of the international community. The Government of Chile calls on all States which have not yet done so to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty without conditions."

I would like to ask you, Mr. President, to have this declaration by the Government of Chile, as well as the one read out at the last meeting of the CD, circulated as official documents of the Conference.

The delegation of Chile joined many other delegations of member countries in sponsoring the statement on this subject introduced by the Ambassador of New Zealand today. We also endorsed the statement along similar lines made by the Rio Group on 29 May and the resolution adopted on the same date by the Council of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

Lastly, we wish to say that we hope the members of the Conference on Disarmament will be able to contribute to the efforts originating from all sectors of the international community to find a positive outcome to the present crisis. More than ever world peace and security require that the objective of non-proliferation and its urgent and inseparable concomitant of nuclear disarmament should be upheld and universally fulfilled.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Chile for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. Now looking to the list, we have about nine more speakers. I therefore wish to suspend the meeting now, to be resumed at 3.15 p.m., if there are no objections to that.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 795th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

In this afternoon's session, I have 11 speakers. I give the floor to the first speaker on my list, the representative of Finland, Ms. Vuorenpää.

Ms. VUORENPÄÄ (Finland): Mr. President, first I would like, on behalf of the delegation of Finland, to congratulate you upon your assumption of the CD presidency and wish you the best success in this demanding task.

I have been asked to bring to the attention of the Conference the joint statement made in Helsinki on 30 May 1998 by Mr. Guido Di Tella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, and Mrs. Tarja Halonen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, on the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests. The statement was made in connection with the State visit to Finland by President Carlos Menem of Argentina.

> "Argentina and Finland are dismayed and disappointed at the news of nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. We urge the two countries to refrain from any further tests.
>
> "The recent tests are contrary to global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. They also undermine stability and threaten to trigger an accelerated arms race in the region.
>
> "Argentina and Finland, together with the international community, underline the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
>
> "We appeal to India and Pakistan to become parties to the NPT and CTBT and call for a peaceful dialogue to address the causes of the tensions between them.
>
> "Argentina and Finland reiterate their common commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and other weapons of mass destruction as well as their conviction to abstain from their development or possession. Total transparency in this matter constitutes the best guarantee for regional and global peace and security and friendship among nations, as is shown in their respective regions in the Americas and Europe."

I ask that this joint statement be circulated as an official CD document.

To conclude, I would like to add that Finland supports the efforts of the United Nations Security Council, including the efforts by the five permanent members, to address the situation.

Finland has also associated itself with the statement read by the Ambassador of New Zealand.

Mr. AGURTSOU (Belarus) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all please accept my congratulations on taking up the post of President of the Conference and my sincere wishes for success in this responsible position. You can rest assured of our full support and cooperation. We also would like to pay due tribute to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Syria, Mr. Taher Al-Hussami, who with his characteristic sense of responsibility guided the Conference through a rather complex phase of its work.

I have asked for the floor in order to read out a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus dated 1 June.

"It was with alarm and anxiety that the Republic of Belarus learned of the nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan.

"On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the series of nuclear tests carried out push the world towards the proliferation of nuclear weapons, mark a step in the nuclear arms race and create significant additional obstacles to further reductions in nuclear armaments.

"These actions run counter to the consistent efforts of the world community to strengthen the regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons at the global and regional levels, which is a very important factor in international stability and security.

"The Republic of Belarus, which a few years ago made a historic choice in renouncing its existing nuclear potential, and which is a party to a number of major agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament, cannot but feel particular concern and alarm at this turn of events.

"The Republic of Belarus calls on all countries with military nuclear programmes which have not become parties to the CTBT to review their current nuclear policy and accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and to work for a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, on which mankind is pinning its hopes for a nuclear-free world in the twenty-first century.

"The events of recent days have heightened our alarm about a possible chain reaction involving nuclear proliferation not only in the South Asian region but also beyond. The lack of legal obligations vis-à-vis the international community will furnish a favourable context in that respect.

"It is well known that the Republic of Belarus, on the basis of its consistent anti-nuclear policy, its fears for the fate of future generations and the fate of the European continent and the world as a whole, and in the light of contemporary realities, has called and

(Mr. Agurtsou, Belarus)

continues to call on all countries to support the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-free space in Central and Eastern Europe.

"We in the Republic of Belarus are convinced that the achievement of this goal will strengthen security and trust on the continent, will prevent the geographical spread of nuclear weapons and will constitute a significant step towards the further consolidation of peace and stability in Europe and throughout the world.

"In our view, all countries which do not possess nuclear weapons could assume agreed obligations relating to the complete renunciation of the deployment of nuclear weapons on their territory."

I would request the secretariat to distribute the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Ms. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasures to avail of this opportunity to express how pleased we are to see you in the Chair guiding our deliberations with your characteristic diplomatic skills. While we congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency, we recall the very warm relations that exist between our two countries, and, in particular, the immense contribution that you have personally made. I assure you of the fullest cooperation of my delegation in discharging your functions. We would also like to place on record our deep sense of appreciation to the Ambassador of Syria, Mr. Taher Al-Hussami, for his diligent efforts as the President of the Conference.

I have requested the floor today to read into the records extracts from the suo moto statement made by the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, before the Indian Parliament on 27 May 1998. We have requested the secretariat to circulate the complete version of the statement as an official document of the CD, along with a paper entitled "Evolution of India's nuclear policy" which had been tabled in Parliament on 27 May 1998.

I take this opportunity to read extracts from the suo moto statement of 27 May made by the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"In 1947, when India emerged as a free country to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, the nuclear age had already dawned. Our leaders then took the crucial decision to opt for self-reliance, and freedom of thought and action. We rejected the cold war paradigm and chose the more difficult path of non-alignment. Our leaders also realized that a nuclear-weapon-free world would enhance not only India's security but also the security of all nations. That is why disarmament was and continues to be a major plank in our foreign policy.

"During the 1950s, India took the lead in calling for an end to all nuclear-weapons testing. Addressing the Lok Sabha on 2 April 1954, Pandit Jawaharlal Neru, to whose memory we pay homage today, stated that

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

'nuclear, chemical and biological energy and power should not be used to forge weapons of mass destruction'. He called for negotiations for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and, in the interim, a standstill agreement to halt nuclear testing. This call was not heeded.

"In 1965, along with a small group of non-aligned countries, India put forward the idea of an international non-proliferation agreement under which the nuclear-weapon States would agree to give up their arsenals, provided other countries refrained from developing or acquiring such weapons. This balance of rights and obligations was not accepted. In the 1960s our security concerns deepened. The country sought security guarantees but the countries we turned to were unable to extend to us the expected assurances. As a result, we made it clear that we would not be able to sign the NPT.

"The Lok Sabha debated the issue on 5 April, 1968. The late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, assured the House that 'we shall be guided entirely by our self-enlightenment and the considerations of national security'. This was a turning point, and this House strengthened the decision of the then Government by reflecting a national consensus.

"Our decision not to sign the NPT was in keeping with out basic objectives. In 1974, we demonstrated our nuclear capability. Successive Governments thereafter have taken all necessary steps in keeping with that resolve and national will, to safeguard India's nuclear option. This was the primary reason behind the 1996 decision for not signing the CTBT, a decision that also enjoyed consensus of this House.

"The decades of the 1980s and 1990s had meanwhile witnessed the gradual deterioration of our security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation. In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons had increased and more sophisticated delivery systems inducted. In addition, India has also been the victim of externally aided and abetted terrorism, militancy and clandestine war.

"At a global level, we see no evidence on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to take decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Instead, we have seen that the NPT has been extended indefinitely and unconditionally, perpetuating and existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the five countries.

"Under such circumstances, the Government was faced with a difficult decision. The touchstone that has guided us in making the correct choice clear was national security. These tests are a continuation of the policies set in motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action.

"India is now a nuclear-weapon State. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

status for others to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India's due, the right of one sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility. We do not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defence, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. We do not intend to engage in an arms race.

"We had taken a number of initiatives in the past. We regret that these proposals did not receive a positive response from other nuclear-weapons States. In fact, had their response been positive, we need not have gone in for our current testing programme. We have been and will continue to be in the forefront of the calls of opening negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention, so that this challenge can be dealt with in the same manner that we have dealt with the scourge of two other weapons of mass destruction - through the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

"Traditionally, India has been an outward-looking country. Our strong commitment to multilateralism is reflected in our active participation in organizations like the United Nations. This engagement will continue. The policies of economic liberalization introduced in recent years have increased our regional and global linkages, and my Government intends to deepen and strengthen these ties.

"Our nuclear policy has been marked by restraint and openness. We have not violated any international agreements either in 1974 or now, in 1998. The restraint exercised for 24 years, after having demonstrated our capability in 1974, is in itself a unique example. Restraint, however, has to arise from strength. It cannot be based upon indecision or doubt. The series of tests recently undertaken by India have led to the removal of doubts. The action involved was balanced in that it was the minimum necessary to maintain what is an irreducible component of our national security calculus.

"Subsequently, the Government has already announced that India will now observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting underground nuclear-test explosions. We have also indicated willingness to move towards a de jure formalization of this declaration."

India's commitment to the moratorium was reiterated by the Prime Minister in his statement to the Indian Parliament on 29 May, a day after the Pakistani test. The Prime Minister of India also reiterated interest in engaging in negotiations on an FMCT, undertaking stringent export controls on nuclear and missile-related technologies, as well as those relating to other weapons of mass destruction, and a "no first use" agreement with Pakistan, as also with other countries bilaterally, or in a multilateral form.

The logic and rationale of India's approaches, which have been set out earlier by me in the Statement, have been vindicated by Pakistan's nuclear

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

tests. These tests have established what has been known all along: that Pakistan has been in possession of nuclear weapons. The clandestine nature of their programme is well documented. It is relevant to note in this context that the transborder terrorism promoted, aided and abetted against India for the last 10 years by Pakistan, has a component of its nuclear capability. India has been a victim of this terrorism which must end.

Let me turn now to our concerns relating to peace and security in our region. These concerns have increased as India's security environment has become complicated with the accumulation of nuclear weapons and missiles in our neighbourhood. The improvements in the security environment in the West have not been replicated in our region. Our concerns are not limited to South Asia alone, but are far deeper and broader in scope. On the other hand, Pakistan's approach has always been Indocentric, as has been made abundantly clear by the justification they have sought to give for their test.

India is committed to the maintenance of peace and security in our region and beyond. Our perspectives on security issues are global in range and scope. Such concerns are natural for a country like India, the home of one sixth of humanity. India's security concerns cannot be relegated to South Asia alone.

We have pursued a policy of maintaining security and stability in our region and of striving for the enlargement of friendly and cooperative relations with our neighbours. With our neighbour to the West, Pakistan, we have always sought to develop a relationship of friendship and cooperation based on mutual respect and regard for each other's concerns. We have sought ways of enhancing cooperation and of addressing all issues, including those on which the two countries do not see eye to eye. For this purpose, we have always been ready to pursue the path of comprehensive, constructive and sustained bilateral dialogue. The process of dialogue was reinstated at India's initiative. The two sides have engaged in the process of framing the modalities of dialogue, and our suggestions in this regard were given to Pakistan in January 1998. We await their response. An important part of our policy towards Pakistan is the promotion of confidence-building measures (CMBs) between the two countries. Several suggestions in this regard have been made by us. Meanwhile, we have scrupulously adhered to the CMBs which are in place. These include an agreement on the prohibition of attack on each other's nuclear facilities and installations. In this context, the recent canard sought to be spread by Pakistan about the possibility of an Indian attack on its nuclear installations was reprehensible. It indicates a mindset which Pakistan must abandon. Attempts to heighten tensions at the border, or propaganda by Pakistan, are not conducive to building better ties.

Before I conclude, I would like to state that we have consistently maintained that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament have to be discussed in a global framework and in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner. Artificial delimitation and selective, compartmentalized approaches which seek to limit these issues to "South Asia" are defective. I have already pointed out that India's security parameters go beyond South Asia. Our concerns in this regard should not be ignored. The communiqué adopted by the NAM

(Ms. Kunadi, India)

Ministerial Conference at Cartagena recently noted that the present situation, whereby nuclear-weapon States insist that nuclear weapons provide unique security benefits and yet monopolize the right to own them, is highly discriminatory, unstable and cannot be sustained. India remains committed to NAM positions for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time. India calls on all nuclear-weapon States and indeed the international community to join with it in opening early negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention so that these weapons can be dealt with in a global, non-discriminatory framework, as the other two weapons of mass destruction have been through the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. SANCHEZ ARNAU (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency. On this occasion I should like to assure you of the support of my country in your task. I should also like to extend our congratulations to the Ambassadors of Syria, Switzerland and Sweden, who have laboured efficiently to advance our work during this frustrating year for the Conference on Disarmament.

We should like to inform the Conference that on 28 May our Government issued the following press communiqué:

> "The Government of the Argentine Republic, further to its press communiqué of 12 May on the Indian nuclear tests, deplores the carrying out of nuclear explosions by Pakistan.
>
> "These events increase the risk of a nuclear arms race which could have adverse consequences for peace and security in the region, and for efforts to promote the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
>
> "Argentina calls on the friendly nations involved to put an end to these actions and promptly ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
>
> "Argentina also reiterates its firm commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and its conviction that refraining from developing and/or possessing such weapons, as well as complete transparency in this area, offer the best guarantee for stable peace and regional and global security and for friendship among nations, as the excellent situation in the South American region demonstrates."

My delegation would like this communiqué to be distributed as an official document of the Conference. Like the Ambassador of Chile, we would also like to draw the Conference's attention to the communiqué that the Rio Group issued on 29 May last reiterating its condemnation of the carrying out of nuclear-weapon tests, and to resolution C/E/RES.39 which was adopted on the same date by the Council of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) regarding the nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan. In view of the importance of those two documents, we should also like them to be distributed as official documents of the Conference.

Mr. SALAS (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): First of all Mr. President, allow me to express our great pleasure at seeing you presiding over our work, which we are sure will lead to positive results under your leadership.

In expressing our support for the statement made today by the Ambassador of New Zealand, we once again share the general concern and the reaction of the international community over the carrying out of nuclear tests that disturb international security and jeopardize the very existence of mankind. The Government of Venezuela has issued a communiqué in which:

> "It deplores the nuclear tests carried out this time by Pakistan on 28 May. It reiterates its condemnation of actions of this type and regrets their negative effects on international efforts to arrive at a ban on nuclear weapons. The Government of Venezuela urges the friendly Government of the Republic of Pakistan to take the necessary steps to sign the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty."

These tests, which are unjustified in every case, as we have said before, far from strengthening regional security, give rise to a dangerous lack of security, not only in relation to the region but to the whole world. These tests not only run counter to the desired process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, but affect the evolution and the very moulding of international law, which increasingly grants primacy to community interests over individual ones, regardless of whether we are speaking of treaty norms or customary norms designed to preserve international public order and the vital interests of the international community as a whole.

We urge the Government of Pakistan and all those countries that have not acceded to the NPT and the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to do so as soon as possible without conditions.

The situation that has led to this meeting once again shows the urgent need to carry out and conclude negotiations on nuclear disarmament, within the Conference. In this regard we firmly support any proposal that will allow us to move forward in our consideration of this issue.

Mr. GALLEGOS CHIRIBOGA (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I must congratulate you on your presidency and promise the support of my delegation for success in your work. I also congratulate the Permanent Representative of Syria who occupied the Chair of the Conference before you.

Ecuador has witnessed with concern the nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan, and on this subject I would like to draw the attention of the Conference on Disarmament to the statements made by the Foreign Ministry of Ecuador. With regard to India:

> "In view of the Indian Government's announcement of the three nuclear tests carried out by that country on 11 May, the Government of Ecuador expresses its most forceful rejection and

(Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga, Ecuador)

deplores these acts which are contrary to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation and raise tension in the region. The Government of Ecuador reiterates that these tests are a challenge to the principles and purposes of non-proliferation proclaimed by the international community, including India itself, since 1994. Ecuador unconditionally supports the international regime established in the NPT and considers it necessary to continue to work for the conclusion of a global, non-discriminatory, effective and multilaterally verifiable instrument that would prohibit any form of nuclear-weapon test explosion on any scale. Ecuador maintains a firm and consistent policy of rejection of nuclear tests which not only run counter to the hopes of the international community, which wants these weapons to be banned once and for all, but generates risks for the environment, health and global security. It urges India to renounce such nuclear tests once and for all and to put into practice the initiative of some of the nuclear-weapon States in adopting a unilateral moratorium, which constitutes a token of goodwill vis-à-vis the negotiations taking place in the Conference on Disarmament."

With regard to Pakistan:

"Ecuador expresses its most forceful rejection and deplores the nuclear tests carried out yesterday by Pakistan, which are contrary to the processes of nuclear non-proliferation and to efforts to extend the world's denuclearized zones. The Government of Ecuador reiterates that these tests increase tensions in the region still further and contravene the non-proliferation principles and objectives proclaimed by the international community, including Pakistan. On this occasion Ecuador reiterates its unconditional support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and its commitment to continue to work for the completion of an international, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and verifiable instrument that would prohibit any type of nuclear-weapon test explosion. Ecuador calls on the Government of Pakistan not to continue with these nuclear tests, not only because they run counter to the hopes of the international community, but because of the enormous risk they present for the environment, health and security worldwide. In view of this new failure to pursue the processes of denuclearization, Ecuador urges the international community to impose an immediate moratorium, as the sole guarantee that the negotiations under way in the Conference on Disarmament will be respected."

Ecuador associated itself with the statements made by the Rio Group and the OPANAL Council and hopes that this Conference will take a stand by consensus on the proposal submitted by the Ambassador of New Zealand, which has 50 co-sponsors.

Mr. AL-HUSSAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Sir, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of

(Mr. Al-Hussami, Syrian Arab Republic)

the presidency of this Conference. I wish you every success and assure you of my eagerness to cooperate with you in the discharge of your task, particularly in your Presidential consultations on item 1 of our agenda.

The statements which we heard previously regarding the Indian nuclear tests and today concerning the Pakistani tests have to varying degrees expressed regret, concern and, in some cases, feelings of shock. These are justified reactions since nuclear weapons are the most dangerous form of weapons of mass destruction and, for about three decades, the international community has been striving to eradicate such weapons, unfortunately to no avail. I recall that, in the first statement I made at this session of the Conference, I said that there was a serious imbalance in the nuclear non-proliferation regime which, far from preventing proliferation, had actually encouraged it. Unfortunately, this is a fact with which we have been faced for more than a quarter of a century. Hence, I wonder whether the majority of member States, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, were really surprised by what happened in the Indian subcontinent and whether those States would be surprised if, for example, Israel carried out similar nuclear tests or used a nuclear warhead to attack an Arab State or States.

What happened was not a surprise because we were all aware of the serious and long-standing imbalance in the nuclear non-proliferation regime since the NPT was adopted and entered into force. Since that time we have always been faced with two facts: firstly, any future nuclear-weapon proliferation would be the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States because they are the sole States which possess such weapons; secondly, after the adoption of the NPT the nuclear-weapon States had no further justification for pursuing their nuclear armament programmes since the NPT was adopted with their approval and consent, including article VI, which has not yet been applied by those States even though they were supposed to fulfil their commitments under the terms of that article as soon as possible.

We are now faced with ancther category of nuclear-weapon State. How was Israel able to acquire nuclear weapons? Who provided it with nuclear weapons? Today, Israel poses a threat to the entire Arab region with this destructive weapon and is still refusing to accede to the NPT or to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA control.

All this happened after the entry into force of the NPT despite the warnings voiced by several States, particularly the Arab States, concerning the dangers inherent in the continuation of this imbalance. The last such warning was voiced at the 1995 Conference held in New York. The statement made by New Zealand and other member States deals with the present situation in the Indian subcontinent but leaves aside the other dangerously explosive situation we still face in the world, namely the fact that Israel is the only State possessing nuclear weapons in the Middle Eastern region. This is why the recent events in the Indian subcontinent should act as a stimulus for the nuclear-weapon States, waking them up to the need to seriously consider the responsibilities they bear in regard to international peace and security and

(Mr. Al-Hussami, Syrian Arab Republic)

prompting them to make a positive endeavour within the CD to establish the mechanisms needed to work on the substance of item 1 on our agenda, which is an item of the highest priority.

Finally, Sir, please allow me to read a statement made by Mr. Farouk al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, at the Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held at Cartagena on 21 May 1998.

> "Israel acquired nuclear weapons through various legitimate and illegitimate means. Israel has endeavoured and is still endeavouring to prevent the Arabs and Muslims from possessing such weapons and any other type of weapon. Israel is still rejecting the demand of the States in the region that the Middle East be turned into a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. When the NPT Review Conference was held in 1995 at the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement emphasized a number of issues including a commitment to the universality of the NPT and refusal to exempt any State from accession to the NPT if we really wanted to put an end to nuclear-weapon proliferation worldwide. Today, it is a strange paradox to see those who, at that time, suppressed that positive attitude on the part of the Non-Aligned Movement now expressing their grave concern at the recent nuclear tests carried out in India and appealing to Pakistan not to follow its example. India and Pakistan are neighbouring countries and important members of the Non-Aligned Movement with which Syria has historic ties of friendship. In keeping with our common desire to preserve their security, we reaffirm our position expressed at the 1995 Conference that, as a matter of principle, no country, and particularly Israel which possesses a large stockpile, should be exempted from accession to the NPT."

The aim is to put an end to the nuclear arms race in the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent and to rid them of all weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. KERVERS (Netherlands): Allow me to make a statement which my Ambassador, who is delayed in returning from the Netherlands to Geneva, intended to deliver himself before this special plenary.

Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the Chair and assure you of the full cooperation of the Netherlands in the implementation of your responsibilities.

My delegation associated itself with the statement on behalf of a number of delegations made by the distinguished representative of New Zealand this morning. In addition, the Netherlands would like to make the following statement.

It was with deep concern and dismay that my Government learned about the nuclear-test explosions carried out by Pakistan on 28 and 30 May. These actions, so quickly after the nuclear weapon test explosions carried out by

(Mr. Kervers, Netherlands)

India, risk having a profound effect not only on peace and stability in the region, but also on global efforts aimed at progressive nuclear arms control and disarmament. The Netherlands has carefully considered how to react to this development. As a first step, my Government has decided to freeze all direct Government-to-Government macroeconomic aid to Pakistan. In addition, arms export licences will no longer be issued. Possible further steps will be discussed in the framework of the European Union.

It is extremely regrettable that the positive developments in nuclear arms control and non-proliferation have suffered a serious setback by the nuclear tests of both Pakistan and India. By testing, Pakistan has rejected the viable option of working together with the international community towards creating an environment conducive to nuclear disarmament, in the Conference on Disarmament and elsewhere. My Government calls on Pakistan, and India, to follow the example set by other countries in recent years and to step away from the nuclear brink.

The nuclear tests by Pakistan are not only a rejection of the CTBT as such, but also of the process supported by the international community of agreeing to pragmatic steps on the road to a world free of nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the only basis to ensure this long-desired objective. Other steps, such as the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, are equally indispensable in this framework. The international community should take action to safeguard these vital instruments for global security and stability and make sure that Pakistan and other States still outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty do not increase the number of nuclear haves - legally or factually. At the same time, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States should set an example by reaffirming their commitment to nuclear disarmament. The Netherlands remains prepared to contribute actively to this process.

Nuclear testing by Pakistan endangers world stability, but especially security in the South Asian region. My Government urges Pakistan to renounce unequivocally further nuclear testing to help avoiding a dangerous arms race, nuclear or conventional. It calls upon both Pakistan and India to show restraint following their recent nuclear testing. Pakistan and India should follow the world community in the reaffirmation of its efforts to enhance international peace and security by contributing in good faith to accepted steps towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Netherlands, therefore, also, and again, calls on India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and to engage in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. It remains my sincere hope that during this session the Conference can agree to substantial contributions towards the common goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. NAVIKAS (Lithuania): Mr. President, my delegation extends its congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of the full support of my country's observer delegation and wish you success in carrying out your

(Mr. Navikas, Lithuania)

duties. I extend also sincere thanks to your predecessors, Ambassadors Norberg of Sweden, Hofer of Switzerland and Al-Hussami of the Syrian Arab Republic, for their contribution to the work of the Conference.

I will be very brief. Lithuania is deeply concerned with the development of the situation in the South Asia subcontinent. My country has associated itself with the statement made at the opening of today's meeting by the distinguished representative of New Zealand.

In addition, I would like to bring to your attention the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania on 29 May which states that:

> "Lithuania expresses its great regret and is concerned about the series of underground nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan on 28 May and those conducted by India on 11 and 13 May.
>
> "The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on Pakistan and India to refrain from statements and actions which could complicate the tense situation, and at the same time to seek the re-establishment of bilateral dialogue and stability in the region. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges both States to immediately announce a moratorium on nuclear weapons development programmes and to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1996."

I would be grateful if this statement is circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. KIERULF (Denmark): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

May I start this statement by pointing out that my country, Denmark, was included in the statement made this morning by the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand on behalf of a number of member States and observers of the Conference? In addition to that statement, my delegation would like to read out a press statement which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark issued on 28 May:

> "The series of underground nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan today constitute a development that causes utmost concern. They bring about a grave deterioration of the situation in South Asia.
>
> "I must strongly urge Pakistan, as well as India, to refrain from beginning a nuclear arms race in the region. Both Governments should show utmost restraint.
>
> "By conducting the nuclear tests, Pakistan has ignored the advice of the international community, including Denmark, to show restraint.

(Mr. Kierulf, Denmark)

"Through its action Pakistan, along with India, carries a heavy responsibility for endangering the disarmament agreements in the nuclear field.

"With the tests of nuclear weapons in India and in Pakistan, the positive global development in the field of nuclear disarmament in the past four to five years has been challenged.

"I therefore most strongly call on both countries to become parties to the NPT and the CTBT as soon as possible without conditions.

"We will discuss this latest development with our partners in the field of disarmament in the United Nations, in NATO, as well as in the European Union and in other forums, including the Nordic countries.

"Today I summoned the Ambassador of Pakistan.

"I will inform the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament of the situation."

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): This is probably the first special session which the Conference on Disarmament has ever held, and my delegation is very glad that this special session has been devoted to the crisis in South Asia. For many years, Pakistan has been trying to draw the attention of the international community and of this body to the dangers of conflict, including the nuclear threat emanating from India. Therefore, we not only did not object to this specific discussion, as India objected to a special session after its own tests, but we welcomed this special session. We are glad that a full and thorough debate has taken place on all aspects of the situation.

Pakistan did not instigate or initiate the present security crisis in South Asia. We were obliged by security considerations and national considerations to respond to India's provocative nuclear tests. We are glad this action-reaction sequence has been widely acknowledged in the statements we have heard here today.

India conducted its tests on 11 and 13 May 1998. As we found, these tests were soon followed by provocative statements and threats against Pakistan. These threats culminated in reports of a planned pre-emptive strike against Pakistan's sensitive facilities in the night of 28 May 1998. Others may discount these reports, but Pakistan, which has been subjected to Indian aggression on three occasions, could not afford to ignore the credible reports of such strikes that we received on that night, and that night brought to the attention of the world the nature, the depth and the dangers of the crisis in South Asia.

The nuclear proliferation crisis in South Asia has thus been transformed into a major security crisis, and it is this security crisis which the international community must deal with. The Government of Pakistan understands and appreciates the sense of concern in many parts of the international community at the resumption of nuclear testing and the escalation of tensions in South Asia. We fully appreciate the endeavours

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

of the world leaders - President Clinton of the United States, President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China, Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Hashimoto of Japan and several others - who sought personally to convince our Prime Minister and the Government that Pakistan should exercise restraint. We appreciate their efforts. We want to tell them that we gave full consideration to their views. We carefully weighed the factors in favour of and against the conduct of our tests. As the distinguished representative of the United States has noted, we dealt with all our friends honestly. There was no deception. And I wish to address my colleague from Australia in this regard and to say to him that we reject such assertions as he has made about deception.

In this context, let me recall another deception. During the CTBT negotiations, while exhorting France to cease its nuclear testing programme, the former Prime Minister of Australia stated that the process of banning nuclear testing was about stopping countries like Iraq and Pakistan, and therefore France should stop worrying about countries such as Germany. This is not only deception but has a tinge of racism.

While we appreciate the sentiments that have been expressed, we would urge all our friends to refrain from the use of intemperate language. I want to tell our friends from Canada that when they supplied an unsafeguarded research reactor to India from which fuel was diverted for India's first test explosion, Pakistan did not describe that action as an irresponsible act, although we could have. So, I believe that we must address this issue with the gravity and seriousness that it deserves, and Pakistan has taken actions will full responsibility and with full knowledge of the costs that were involved.

Our decision to test became virtually inevitable because of three factors: firstly, the steady escalation in the provocations and threats emanating from India. We were told that India is a nuclear-weapon State. We have just heard that repeated here today. We were told India would use nuclear weapons. We were told that the strategic balance has been altered by India's tests, and now India could teach Pakistan a lesson. We had to take that into account. Secondly, there was the weak and partial response of the world community to India's tests and threats. Obviously, no one was - and no one is - willing to underwrite Pakistan's security. We have to do it ourselves. Therefore, the criticism of Pakistan's testing which has been voiced by some of our friends, who enjoy the NATO security umbrella, this we believe was not even-handed. The third factor relevant to our decision was the realization that, given the nature of the Indian regime, we could not leave them in any doubt about the credibility of our capability to deter and respond devastatingly to any aggression against our country or pre-emptive strikes against other facilities.

Pakistan thus took the very difficult, painful decision to respond to India's tests. But the difference between India's and Pakistan's actions is crucial, and we hope that our friends will bear that in mind. India's tests were a provocation. Pakistan's were a reaction. India's tests had destabilized the security balance in South Asia. Pakistan's tests have restabilized the balance of mutual deterrence in South Asia. Pakistan

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

therefore regrets the failure of some of our friends to appreciate this distinction between India's action and our reaction. We believe that the sanctions and other actions that some have taken against Pakistan are unfair and unjust and in the final analysis will prove to be counter-productive.

Pakistan has welcomed the offer of mediation by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Unfortunately, India has rejected the Secretary-General's mediation. We also welcome the initiative taken by the United States to call for a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the permanent members of the Security Council in Geneva from the day after tomorrow. We look forward to a fair and just conclusion from this meeting which reflects the realities of the situation.

Every crisis presents a challenge, but it often also presents an opportunity. This crisis today offers the opportunity for the international community to build a stable structure of peace and security in South Asia through dialogue and consensus. Thus, it is essential that we do not maintain a narrow focus only on the issue of non-proliferation. Peace and security in South Asia must be dealt with in a comprehensive manner.

The international community now needs to look to the future. We believe that there are at least four aspects which need to be addressed: first, measures to avoid a conflict and ease current tensions; second, steps to promote nuclear stabilization in South Asia and insure against further nuclear proliferation; third, the dangers posed by the imbalance in conventional arms and forces between India and Pakistan; and fourth, the need for a resolution of the underlying core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, a dispute which is at the root of the confrontation between India and Pakistan.

As regards the avoidance of conflict, it should be clear that the Indian proposal for a no-first-use agreement is somewhat disingenuous. Perhaps it is designed to make it safe for India to continue to use its conventional weapons superiority to threaten and coerce Pakistan and other smaller neighbours. Pakistan has proposed a more comprehensive non-aggression agreement banning all use or threat of force, as required by the United Nations Charter.

As regards the nuclear issue, in the short-term, at least what is required most is an international consensus on how to stabilize the situation - in other words, how to prevent an open nuclear arms race in South Asia. Pakistan is willing to participate in and contribute to international endeavours to achieve such stabilization, to establish what might be called a nuclear restraint regime in South Asia. Pakistan is not interested in an arms race with India, nor is Pakistan seeking nuclear-weapon status. Our tests were defence-oriented and meant to restore strategic balance in the region. We will adjust ourselves in the best interest to Pakistan, as developments in various related areas take place. We will continue to show restraint in the field of weaponization as a mature and responsible nation. Our response will be carefully calibrated to the provocation.

In this context, we in Pakistan cannot ignore that India has declared itself a nuclear-weapon State, declared that it will be placing nuclear

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

warheads on its missiles. It is already deploying nuclear-capable missiles and has threatened to use its nuclear weapons in case of either a conventional or non-conventional conflict. This has been confirmed by the Indian statement made here a few minutes ago. The question arises: does the world accept India as a nuclear-weapon State? And if it does not, how does the world change the reality of India's nuclear-weapons capabilities? Is the demand for India - and also Pakistan - to sign the NPT now realistic after their tests, knowing full well that India has refused to sign the NPT for the past 30 years?

These are relevant questions, but they are extremely relevant for Pakistan. In evaluating our position on the CTBT, it will be important for us to know whether India will continue to conduct further nuclear tests, whether it will be accommodated in the CTBT as a nuclear-weapon State, a non-nuclear-weapon State or as something else. Similarly, as regards the FMCT, for Pakistan, this issue is now dependent on India's nuclear status, its degree of weaponization and the size and quality of its fissile material stockpiles. Pakistan cannot afford to allow India to once again destabilize the balance of deterrence in future through asymmetry in the level of fissile material stockpiles. Likewise, we cannot afford a situation of inferiority in missile capabilities.

Nevertheless, Pakistan is prepared to consider means for mutual restraint which can help to stabilize the nuclear situation in South Asia. This could be done through existing agreements or through specific measures especially designed for a nuclear restraint regime in South Asia. This regime could also include measures to insulate the proliferation effect of the recent developments in South Asia on the rest of the world.

Nuclear restraint and balance in South Asia will be made possible if this is accompanied by credible effective measures for greater balance and symmetry in conventional arms capabilities in the region. In this context, we should not ignore the huge arms purchases which India has contracted or is considering from various sources. The Indian defence budget announced today has escalated spending further. Nor can the world ignore that Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been steadily eroded over the years by discriminatory embargoes and restraints.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the danger of conflict between Pakistan and India, whether conventional or non-conventional, arises from the underlying dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. It will not be sufficient to ease tensions and sweep this burning problem once again under the carpet. India seeks to portray Kashmir as a problem of terrorism. This carries no credibility. The fact of the matter is that there are 600,000 Indian troops occupying Kashmir, a territory the size of Belgium. There is one Indian solider for every three Kashmiri men. This is not a problem of terrorism. This is a campaign to suppress the freedom of movement of a people which has remained under India's colonial domination for the past 50 years. India must agree to credible steps for a solution of this problem.

India and Pakistan have been unable to resolve this problem bilaterally for 50 years. It is therefore time that the international community took

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

collective action to try to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Kashmir. At the very least, it should evolve a political framework within which a solution for Kashmir can be found. It should give active support and impetus to future bilateral negotiations between Pakistan and India on Kashmir. It should not allow India to circumvent genuine negotiations on the Kashmir issue once again.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan has reaffirmed our Government's determination to resume Pakistan-India dialogue to address all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as peace and security. Last year, India and Pakistan had reached agreement on the modalities for such negotiations. We hope that India will live up to that agreement and implement that agreement so that we can resume our talks as soon as possible. We want to defuse regional tension, which can only be achieved by resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. It is therefore incumbent on all those who genuinely want peace to lend their weight to an early settlement of this basic problem.

The Conference on Disarmament must play its role in promoting peace and security in South Asia. The CD is in a position to address the problem in South Asia in two ways. Firstly, the CD could reach important agreements for genuine movement towards nuclear disarmament. As has been said here, this is a wake-up call for nuclear disarmament. This crisis, if utilized in this way, could contribute to progress in this field. Nuclear disarmament would be a contribution to restraint in South Asia as well. Secondly, the CD could contribute more directly to discussions of the situation in South Asia and try to promote a concept for regional peace and stability, which can be guaranteed or which can be evolved within the framework of a global security environment.

Pakistan is prepared to cooperate with the international community to arrest the crisis in South Asia and to build a stable structure of peace and security in the region. But let us remember, cooperation and coercion are not mutually compatible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? Yes, the Ambassador of Australia.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Just to remind delegations that we had scheduled informal open-ended consultations on landmines today. Obviously, that did not take place. We are hoping to reschedule them on Thursday morning, depending on the availability of rooms, and I hope we shall be in a position at the commencement of the plenary on Thursday to advise delegations at what time and in which room those open-ended consultations on landmines will take place.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador for the announcement. This concludes our business here today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday 4 June at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.796
4 June 1998

Original: ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 4 June 1998, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sungar (Turkey)

GE.98-62201 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 796th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, who will address the Conference this morning. Over the past years, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has regularly sent high-level officials to address this Conference, and the presence of the Foreign Minister among us today testifies to the abiding interest of his Government in our work and to the importance it attaches to our forum, especially at this crucial time. In view of the close historical ties between his country and my own, I am particularly gratified that the Foreign Minister has found time in his busy schedule to be with us today.

I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, to address the Conference.

Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, first of all my felicitations to you. It is pleasing to be here during the presidency of a distinguished representative from Turkey, the neighbour with whom we enjoy traditionally friendly relations. And then my deep condolences to the Government and people of Germany, and particularly the families of the victims of the tragic train incident which resulted in heavy loss of life.

There are a large number of vital issues that need to be addressed in this forum. Recent developments in our region, which have been the subject of my consultations in Islamabad and New Delhi, justify leaving those issues to a future occasion.

The exchanges in Islamabad and New Delhi have been preliminary but extensive. They provided the possibility of hearing, first-hand, the views and positions of both India and Pakistan on the nuclear tests that have been conducted, and their implications. We have listened and noted carefully the causes and reasons that have given rise to the decision to go ahead with the tests. We have also tried to maintain focus on the potential risks and dangers, and what could be considered as possible ways to avoid aggravation of the situation, and to move towards reducing tension. Here, I will share some of my initial findings and conclusions with you.

There is no doubt that a lack of serious attention and an absence of concrete action on nuclear disarmament has been a contributing factor. The indefinite extension of the NPT was to lead to definite moves towards a nuclear-weapons-free world. Instead, matters remained stalemated, progress became a rare commodity and the mood turned sombre. Alarm was particularly raised when some nuclear-weapon States, in defending their positions against the near-universal consensus on the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons expressed at The Hague, claimed the permanent right to possession of nuclear weapons, basing their argument on the permanent extension of the Treaty.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

This, along with the refusal to agree on commencing negotiations on nuclear disarmament at this Conference and the failure to address some of the legitimate concerns raised by non-nuclear-weapon States during the formation of the CTBT, yielded fertile ground for actions that we would all regret. Therefore, in laying responsibility, we should bear in mind that at least part of the blame rests on the insufficiency and insignificance of the response to demands for genuine moves on nuclear disarmament.

I should like to make it clear that to conduct nuclear tests is a misconduct, in laymen's terms, and that the ensuing responsibilities cannot be evaded, or eroded, under any pretext. All States, of course, have the legitimate and sovereign right to seek, acquire and develop any and all means necessary to preserve and ensure their national security. But when it comes to the question of nuclear weapons, it is evident that they breed instability and kill confidence by altering fundamentally the balance and the status quo. What is not evident, however, is that they enhance security. It seems more likely that the reverse is the case, and security follows a diminishing trend.

We should bear in mind, at the same time, that the nuclear capability of India or Pakistan has never been a complete secret. Its coming to the surface, therefore, is not a complete surprise. Yet, while it might be sublime to have a giant's strength, borrowing Shakespeare's edict, it is a giant mistake to manifest it. This was one genie that had much better stayed in the bottle.

Thus, the region has been faced with a situation of heightened alert. While on the surface things appear normal, there is an underlying sense of creeping uncertainty and ambiguity. The nuclear sword of Damocles is now hanging over the region by a slender thread. This is a source of serious concern for all of us in the region, and hence it should remain the focus of our sharp attention at this stage and our immediate priority. Without any attempt at unbridled interference, we need to move in order to help defuse tension and prevent further escalation.

It is entirely understandable, of course, that States may find it indispensable to express strong positions of deploring, out of frustration perhaps, and to prescribe means of exerting pressure and imposing sanctions on India and Pakistan. There seems to be a growing trend in this direction. The statement read out here two days ago on behalf of a large number of CD member States is only one indication. As the Chinese proverb goes, "everyone pushes the falling fence". But neither India nor Pakistan are falling fences or fences that fall. This, I believe, we would do well to realize. Therefore, rather than remaining fixated on the negative, I suggest seeking and accentuating the positive, however modest or meagre it might be under the prevailing circumstances.

With this in mind, and having noted the positions of the Governments in Islamabad and New Delhi, it is my impression, with a reasonable level of confidence, that the following areas represent common elements and a basis for initiatives that might be explored by the two States:

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

A renewed commitment to resume and continue a comprehensive dialogue on all outstanding issues in a sustained manner with a view to their early resolution and with the objective of promoting a friendly and harmonious relationship between Pakistan and India and stability in the region. The dialogue would include, inter alia, the following: peace and security, Jammu and Kashmir, confidence-building measures, and nuclear issues, including the NPT and the CTBT.

The issues could be dealt with through pre-arranged mechanisms, which include discussions at the highest possible level, where appropriate, and particularly in relation to those indicated above.

A commitment to refrain from conducting any further nuclear tests for at least as long as the dialogue is under way and ways of dealing with nuclear issues are being examined.

A commitment to engage in immediate discussion with a representative group of non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT and signatory to the CTBT on joining these treaties.

I note here that the removal of export controls and other impediments to access to material, equipment and technology for peaceful use seems to be an essential issue for India and Pakistan in considering signing the CTBT and for making commitments conforming with the letter and spirit of the NPT.

A commitment to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from any act that may aggravate the situation.

Avoiding the assembly or deployment of nuclear weapons.

Along with this, I should add a commitment to refrain from the transfer of weapons-related materials.

There are other suggestions put forward such as the conclusion of a non-aggression pact, a commitment for non-use or no first use, and readiness to commence negotiations on an FMCT. Some of these are apparently not ripe to move off the ground as yet. The latter two seem to be difficult, for instance, at this stage while an imbalance in the broader array or armaments and in stockpiles of fissile material is perceived.

Confidence-building measures, on the other hand, may include a variety of possibilities not dissimilar to those adopted in the European theatre.

I do recognize that some may not consider these elements sufficient or satisfactory in the face of the gravity of events and the strong position of the international community, as a whole, against nuclear explosions. As a matter of fact, they are not intended to be sufficient on their own. They tend to provide a broad enough basis, however, for a process to start which hopefully will pick up its own momentum and open the way for further moves.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

We intend to remain ready to continue regular exchanges with both States since we have noted that this is welcomed and as long, or as far, as our efforts may be deemed useful and helpful. We are, after all, in this neighbourhood and its security and stability is prominent to us. We hope that others may also be able and prepared to contribute once the heavy dust which has darkened the air has settled.

Before I conclude, let me issue a reminder that the recent developments have underlined the necessity of ensuring the universality of the NPT. This imperative is not only of paramount importance in South Asia but, in fact, in the Middle East, where the refusal by Israel to accede to the NPT and accept IAEA safeguards has gravely endangered the security of the entire region. this is more alarming in the light of the recent deadlock in the NPT Preparatory Committee. Thus it is necessary for all to accept the will of the international community to take practical steps for the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no other speakers on my list today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The Ambassador of Bangladesh, the floor is yours.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): We have listened with great attention and interest to the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi. We wish to thank him for the briefing he has given us and the rich analysis that he has provided, also for the recent constructive initiative he had undertaken in New Delhi and Islamabad. It is our belief that efforts such as these, rather than the ritualistic wringing of hands or throwing them up in despair, will help.

The tests have already taken place. Much as these sadden us, we must now look beyond the big bang and see how we could work together to create effective confidence-building mechanisms so that misperceptions or misunderstandings do not result in uncontrolled crisis slides. We must also be so focused as to ensure that all times reason prevails. Bangladesh will contribute to this process through positive action. After all, in the ultimate analysis, it is rationality which is the essence of deterrence.

Mr. DLAMINI (Swaziland): Speaking for the first time in this august assembly, my delegation would wish to preface our remarks by expressing our profound appreciation for having been admitted as an observer State. It is our hope that in the nearest future we shall pursue the relevant avenues to become a participating State in this body.

Coming from a region that has already set what we regard as a good example, that of signing a nuclear-free-zone treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, last year, it is our hope in Africa that the rest of the regions of the world may follow suit. We did not do so as a region because of having the amenities to do so, but guided by faith, guided by hope, we felt, as a region, it was the right thing to do. With our friends in Asia, we shall remain available to

(Mr. Dlamini, Swaziland)

share the merits, the hope, the message of trust that can be achieved when a denuclearization zone is being signed and adhered to by all parties. Equally, through you, Mr. President, my delegation would appeal to your office to enhance whatever methods to support the initiative here today presented by the Government of Iran. Whatever the Government of Iran intends doing is not for their glory, but for the glory of mankind as a whole. Accordingly, through you, Mr. President, my delegation would express our profound gratitude on this initiative spelled out above by the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, at the outset allow me to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his presence here and for his analysis of the situation with which we are faced and his very interesting initiatives.

The nuclear-weapon tests carried out during this month of May by India and Pakistan have been condemned by my Government, as we have always condemned all nuclear tests. In this very plenary of the Conference I have read out the communiqués issued by the Government of Mexico.

At the end of the first part of the session of this Conference on 26 March, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Relations of Mexico, Ambassador Carmen Moreno, expressed in this room the concern that we had at that time that "today the probability that these catastrophic weapons will be used intentionally is greater than ever". A bare two months have passed since these words were heard in this room, perhaps with some scepticism, and the media and statements by various Governments have echoed the same sentiments and promoted the same concern. We are not congratulating ourselves on that fact, but we do view as positive the fact that this Conference has come out of the drowsiness and complacency that had enveloped it for almost two years. What is important now is to understand the nature and the scope of the crises which we are facing and to direct our efforts towards achieving concrete results.

I refer to crises in the plural because I think there are at least two crises, which are interrelated but easily distinguishable. On the one hand there is between two countries in South Asia increasing tension in their mutual relations. This is an age-old controversy, with deep and complex roots, which has now been officially exacerbated with the addition of a nuclear dimension. If you will allow me a metaphor, a nuclear fuse has been attached to an old powder keg. We must urgently extinguish this fuse. The disputes require peaceful solutions. This, however, is not the appropriate forum to seek the settlement of disputes, nor is it competent in the maintenance of peace and security. However, we could, in the context of an agreement for the lowering of tension in South Asia, contribute through negotiations designed to bring a nuclear arms race under control. It is clear that lowering tension in South Asia requires that the aggressive nuclear capability that has been displayed should not be converted into the deployment of nuclear weapons, the specific targeting of any arms deployed, or the placing of deployed and targeted weapons systems on alert. We could also contribute to the necessary mechanisms for verification of any agreements

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

reached. But all this would have to be done in the framework of understandings for the reaching of which other forums are more competent and other methods of peaceful settlement more appropriate. Today, the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran pointed to some interesting avenues that could be explored. Of course, in this security crisis in South Asia we have been encouraged by the statements by India and Pakistan that they do not intend to embark on a nuclear arms race. The Conference on Disarmament must be ready and willing to contribute to peace and security in that or any other region, even though its purpose is to negotiate global agreements.

But in the crisis that we are now experiencing there is a second dimension that clearly concerns us and is relevant to us as the sole multilateral negotiating body for disarmament. I am of course referring to the crisis in the international regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which rests on difficult balancing acts, and which forms a structure in which we have seen disquieting cracks.

The regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is essential to peace and international security. It is composed of nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty and the decisions taken when it was extended indefinitely in 1995, and the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

This non-proliferation regime, made up of regional and worldwide treaties, rests on a number of basic understandings which are worth recapitulating.

The first understanding is that the commitments undertaken in the various treaties take on their full significance, a measure of stability, and actually contribute to peace and security, only if they are conscientiously respected and if they are universal. Regional universality, in the case of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Universality tout court in other cases. Universality is not an immediate requirement, but it must be realistically attainable and progress must be made towards it. Of course this May's nuclear-weapon tests have cast doubts on the possibility that some of these treaties, in their present wording, will acquire universal status.

The second basis premise or understanding on which the non-proliferation regime rests is that the nuclear-weapon States undertake not in any way to assist, encourage or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Extremely serious questions have been raised in the media over recent weeks, and in this very room, concerning the extent to which certain nuclear-weapon States have discharged this treaty obligation. These questions call for a response. The credibility of the non-proliferation regime is at stake. This issue will certainly be discussed extensively and in depth at the forthcoming conference to review the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that is scheduled for the year 2000.

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

The third premise or understanding is that renouncing the nuclear option is not the same as renouncing the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, and that States which have accepted the necessary safeguards should have access to information, materials and inputs for the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Certainly, well-founded doubts have arisen concerning the way in which this right is being respected. My delegation at least has always advocated multilateral agreements among all the parties, and not between self-selected clubs, for the transfer of technologies or dual-use materials. Once again this is an essential element of the non-proliferation regime, the implementation of which at present is far from satisfactory.

The fourth basic understanding is that all the treaties that comprise the non-proliferation regime, and the regime itself, are by their very nature of a transitional and provisional nature. This is an indispensable phase on the path to nuclear disarmament, and it will only be necessary until that objective is attained. There exists an obligation on all States, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to undertake and conclude negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to a world that is free from nuclear weapons. The non-proliferation regime is designed to facilitate cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, the destruction of all stockpiles of such weapons and the elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The political will to comply with this binding commitment has been called into question by the triumphalism that followed the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

I had the honour to be a member of my country's delegation to the 1995 conference which adopted, simultaneously and without a vote, principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament, a strengthened review process for the treaty and the indefinite extension of its validity. How surprised I was when I reached this Conference on Disarmament a few weeks later and heard repeated claims that the treaty had become permanent. When I took the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament three years ago I said: "Obviously, the indefinite validity of a treaty means that the rights and obligations contracted by the parties do not expire on a fixed date. This, of course, does not mean that, as it seems to me I have heard, the treaty has become permanent or eternal. Few things in nature or in life" - if any - "are that, and certainly not an instrument conceived as a step towards a broader objective, subject to periodic" review "and susceptible of being denounced".

A regime based on asymmetry can be nothing but provisional. If in addition it is not universal, instability will be one of its characteristics. The non-proliferation regime rests basically on its credibility, and this in turn calls for practical and progressive steps towards its objective, which is the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Reluctance to deal with nuclear disarmament in this Conference, or to address it with the priority that it deserves in the Preparatory Committee for the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, has raised serious doubts about the commitments entered into in the decisions on principles and objectives for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation adopted on the occasion of the indefinite extension of the 1968 treaty. The failure of the second Preparatory Committee deepened these doubts.

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

There is a need for changes in perceptions and attitudes. It is not consistent to preach non-proliferation and practise nuclear deterrence. It is not convincing to claim that international security must rest on perpetual monopolies. It is not possible to continue to maintain that nuclear disarmament is a matter only for those that possess nuclear weapons, and hope to preserve the non-proliferation regime. Either nuclear disarmament is an aspiration and an undertaking shared by all, or the non-proliferation regime is destined to have a precarious and unstable future.

The fifth essential component of the non-proliferation regime is that States which give up the nuclear option should receive assurances against the use or the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. These assurances have to be credible, that is to say they have to be multilaterally negotiated, precise and binding. Until now none of the assurances offered, not even under the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, fulfil all these requirements - at least not the requirement of precision. Certainly in the current crisis, the crisis involving South Asia and the non-proliferation regime, the issue of security assurances has acquired special significance and requires urgent attention.

The nuclear tests carried out this month raise new problems with regard to security assurances granted under the treaties that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. This is a problem that calls for careful and sensitive consideration. Next week, I intend to officially initiate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on security assurances, of which I have the honour to be the Chairman.

The non-proliferation regime is essential for peace and international security, since the risk that nuclear weapons might come to be used increases in direct proportion to their dissemination, accumulation and qualitative improvement. The regime is effective to the extent that nuclear weapons are not acquired by more countries, existing stockpiles do not grow and weapons systems are not technologically upgraded. The prohibition of nuclear testing cannot be just an instrument for horizontal non-proliferation. To see the CTBT as a non-proliferation treaty for threshold countries is not only a biased interpretation but a political and practical mistake. The essence and purpose of the CTBT is also, and above all, to curb vertical proliferation. If nuclear weapons continue to be developed through subcritical explosions or any other type of tests, an important dimension of the non-proliferation regime will be seriously called into question.

Likewise, it will not be possible to conclude the proposed treaty on cessation of the production of fissile material if the intention is to have one more instrument in the field of horizontal non-proliferation aimed at specific countries. It will have to be conceived and drawn up as a genuine disarmament measure.

The international non-proliferation regime must be preserved, its credibility re-established and its future assured. To that end, this Conference on Disarmament must undertake right away urgent negotiations on nuclear disarmament which will dispel all doubts regarding the unequivocal commitment of all States to the objective of a world free from nuclear weapons.

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

Under a decision taken on 26 March last, the President of this Conference has to hold consultations on how to deal with nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. It is urgently necessary to intensify these consultations with a view to the prompt establishment of an ad hoc committee, but also for a systematic examination of the crisis affecting South Asia and the crisis in the non-proliferation regime, in order to defuse the former and restore the credibility and viability of the latter.

In these consultations we can hardly use the still prevailing division into groups inherited from the cold war. It would be advisable to set up a consultative group composed of the de jure or de facto nuclear-weapon countries, and a geographically representative number of countries that do not possess such weapons, which could help you, Mr. President, in your heavy responsibilities. We wish you every success and offer you our support and cooperation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): I wish to thank His Excellency Minister Kharrazi for speaking to this Conference and for the condolences he expressed on the tragic train accident in Germany. I will transmit his condolences to my Government.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for your statement, Ambassador. If there are no other speakers, I just wish to point out that the secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for the period 4-12 June 1998. This timetable is merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 11 June 1998, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.797
11 June 1998

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 11 June 1998, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Sungar (Turkey)

GE.98-62504 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 797th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Conference, to convey to the delegation of Nigeria our condolences on the passing away of its head of State, General Sani Abacha.

I have on my list of speakers for today firstly, the Special Coordinator on prevention of an arms race in outer space, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, and then the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Norberg, followed by the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer, on behalf of the Group of 21.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I should like to inform you that immediately following this plenary meeting we shall hold informal open-ended consultations on agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", in this room.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Palihakkara, who will speak in his capacity as Special Coordinator on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. PALIHAKKARA (Sri Lanka): Before I proceed, may I also convey to the delegation of Nigeria the condolences of my Government and my delegation on the passing away of the head of State, General Sani Abacha?

I have requested the floor in my capacity as Special Coordinator on prevention of an arms race in outer space to make a brief progress report on consultations that I have carried out. I am obliged to do so at this plenary as I will be away from Geneva next week.

Pursuant to the decision of the Conference on Disarmament concerning the appointment of Special Coordinator on agenda item 3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (CD/1501), I have held a series of consultations, bilaterally and multilaterally, including open-ended consultations held on 5 June 1998.

There was general recognition that item 3 of the CD's agenda continues to be one of importance and urgency, and delegations showed readiness to contribute towards that common objective in a constructive spirit. It was also generally understood that while there continues to be no objection in principle to the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee, further consultations would be needed as to when that decision can be taken. Meanwhile, several constructive ideas were considered during open-ended and other consultations concerning updating of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee contained in the decision of the CD dated 13 February 1992, as also referred to in United Nations General Assembly resolution 52/37.

It was also evident that some delegations needed time to consider all related aspects of the issue and the timing of the establishment of the ad hoc

(Mr. Palihakkara, Sri Lanka)

committee. I would continue with my consultations and, given the wide measure of support and constructive spirit displayed by all delegations, hope to submit in due course a conclusive report including a revised draft mandate.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Special Coordinator for the presentation of his progress report. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Lars Norberg.

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): I have asked for the floor to present on behalf of the delegations of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden the joint declaration related to nuclear disarmament issued on 9 June 1998 by the Foreign Ministers of these countries. The nuclear disarmament process needs a new and forceful impetus. We call on all States to join us in our efforts for the early achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The joint declaration reads as follows:

"We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden, have considered the continued threat to humanity represented by the perspective of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States, as well as by those three nuclear-weapons-capable States that have not acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the attendant possibility of use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The seriousness of this predicament has been further underscored by the recent nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

"We fully share the conclusion expressed by the commissioners of the Canberra Commission that 'the proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used - accidentally or by decision - defies credibility. The only complete defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons and assurance that they will never be produced again.'

"We recall that the General Assembly of the United Nations already in January 1946 - in its very first resolution - unanimously called for a commission to make proposals for 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction'. While we can rejoice at the achievement of the international community in concluding total and global prohibitions on chemical and biological weapons by the conventions of 1972 and 1993, we equally deplore the fact that the countless resolutions and initiatives which have been guided by similar objectives in respect of nuclear weapons in the past half-century remain unfulfilled.

"We can no longer remain complacent at the reluctance of the nuclear-weapon States and the three nuclear-weapons-capable States to take that fundamental and requisite step, namely a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability, and we urge them to take that step now.

"The vast majority of the membership of the United Nations has entered into legally binding commitments not to receive, manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

These undertakings have been made in the context of the corresponding legally binding commitments by the nuclear-weapon States to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We are deeply concerned at the persistent reluctance of the nuclear-weapon States to approach their treaty obligations as an urgent commitment to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons.

"In this connection, we recall the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

"The international community must not enter the third millennium with the prospect that the maintenance of these weapons will be considered legitimate for the indefinite future, when the present juncture provides a unique opportunity to eradicate and prohibit them for all time. We therefore call on the Governments of each of the nuclear-weapon States and the three nuclear-weapons-capable States to commit themselves unequivocally to the elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability and to agree to start work immediately on the practical steps and negotiations required for its achievement.

"We agree that the measures resulting from such undertakings leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons will begin with those States that have the largest arsenals. But we also stress the importance that they be joined in a seamless process by those with lesser arsenals at the appropriate juncture. The nuclear-weapon States should immediately begin to consider steps to be taken to this effect.

"In this connection, we welcome both the achievements to date and the future promise of the START process as an appropriate bilateral and subsequently plurilateral mechanism including all the nuclear-weapon States, for the practical dismantlement and destruction of nuclear armaments undertaken in pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

"The actual elimination of nuclear arsenals, and the development of requisite verification regimes, will of necessity require time. But there are a number of practical steps that the nuclear-weapon States can, and should, take immediately. We call on them to abandon present hair-trigger postures by proceeding to de-alert and de-activate their weapons. They should also remove non-strategic nuclear weapons from deployed sites. Such measures will create beneficial conditions for continued disarmament efforts and help prevent inadvertent, accidental or unauthorized launches.

"In order for the nuclear disarmament process to proceed, the three nuclear-weapons-capable States must clearly and urgently reverse the pursuit of their respective nuclear weapons development or deployment and refrain from any actions which could undermine the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament. We

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

call upon them, and all other States that have not yet done so, to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and take the necessary measures which flow from adherence to this instrument. We likewise call upon them to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions.

"An international ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices ('cut-off') would further underpin the process towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As agreed in 1995 by the States parties to the NPT, negotiations on such a convention should commence immediately.

"Disarmament measures alone will not bring about a world free from nuclear weapons. Effective international cooperation to prevent the proliferation of these weapons is vital and must be enhanced through, inter alia, the extension of controls over all fissile material and other relevant components of nuclear weapons. The emergence of any new nuclear-weapon State, as well as any non-State entity in a position to produce or otherwise acquire such weapons, seriously jeopardizes the process of eliminating nuclear weapons.

"Other measures must also be taken pending the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. Legally binding instruments should be developed with respect to a joint no-first-use undertaking between the nuclear-weapon States and as regards non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States - so called 'negative security assurances'.

"The conclusion of the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the Antarctic Treaty, have steadily excluded nuclear weapons from entire regions of the world. The further pursuit, extension and establishment of such zones, especially in regions of tension, such as the Middle East and South Asia, represents a significant contribution to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

"These measures all constitute essential elements which can and should be pursued in parallel: by the nuclear-weapon States among themselves; and by the nuclear-weapon States together with the non-nuclear-weapon States, thus providing a road map towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

"The maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons will require the underpinnings of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments.

"We, on our part, will spare no efforts to pursue the objectives outlined above. We are jointly resolved to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. We firmly hold that the determined and rapid preparation for the post-nuclear era must start now."

In conclusion, I should like to request that the joint declaration I have just read out will be circulated as an official document of the Conference. We will submit the text in English and Spanish.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer, on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): In my capacity as coordinator of the G-21, I was requested to make the following statement on behalf of the Group.

The G-21 reiterates that it continues to attach the highest priority to nuclear disarmament and to the need for the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on the subject in the CD.

The Group emphasizes the relevance of various proposals which call for the establishment of an ad hoc committee made by members of the G-21, such as those contained in documents: CD/1388, of 14 March 1996; CD/1419, of 7 August 1996; CD/1453, of 1 April 1997; CD/1462, of 5 June 1997; CD/1463, of 12 June 1997; CD/1483, of 20 January 1998; and CD/1534, containing the section on disarmament of the Cartagena ministerial declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Group is of the view that the consultations you are undertaking, Sir, pursuant to the declaration and the decision contained respectively in documents CD/1500 and CD/1501 should lead this Conference to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament forthwith.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland): Mr. President, I would just like to remind the Conference that according to the tentative timetable which was adopted by the Conference last week, tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. open-ended informal consultations on expansion of membership will be held in this room.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Switzerland for his comments. This concludes my list of speakers for today.

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for the period 15-19 June 1998. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on security guarantees and the Special Coordinators. It is merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As announced at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I shall convene informal open-ended consultations on agenda item 1 in five minutes' time.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 18 June 1998, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.798
18 June 1998

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 18 June 1998, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Sungar (Turkey)

GE.98-62596 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 798th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in Charge of Legal and Political Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who happens to be also my friend. Together we have spent long hours to prepare a joint statement in a totally different forum. Dr. Zarif will address the Conference this morning. Only two weeks ago, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, in an important statement, shared with us some observations on his consultations in Islamabad and New Delhi, and the presence among us yet again today of a high-level governmental official from the Islamic Republic of Iran demonstrates the continued interest of the Iranian Government in our work and the importance it attaches to our forum, especially at this crucial juncture.

I also wish to welcome Mr. Ralph Earle, Deputy Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament.

Besides the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Indonesia.

I now invite the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mohammad Javad Zarif, to address the Conference.

Mr. ZARIF (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me begin by expressing my happiness at seeing you, a good friend and an able diplomat, presiding over the Conference, and also express my pleasure to be able to speak before the Conference on Disarmament after a breakthrough in a more than a year of stalemate in its programme of work. As the Foreign Minister pointed out in his address, he had reserved the possibility of addressing the other issues of the Conference at a later stage and this, I presume, is the later stage.

The recent nuclear tests in South Asia and the escalation of tension in the region have once more highlighted the prominent role of the Conference on Disarmament in contributing to regional and international peace and security. They have equally sharpened the focus on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority of the international community. Articulation of, and agreement on, practical and effective methods of attaining the global aspiration of total elimination of nuclear weapons remain the genuine preoccupation of the CD.

With an eye to the future, we should draw lessons from this experience and set the stage for prevention of similar incidents. In line with this approach, there is the need for a fresh look at the question of nuclear disarmament.

For decades, numerous calls for nuclear disarmament have fallen on deaf ears and, much to the frustration of humanity at large, there has been little significant progress in this regard. Even the clear and historic advisory

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), emphasizing the legal obligation to engage in a genuine effort for the elimination of these weapons, has yet to be heeded.

While an overwhelming majority of States insist on multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, some nuclear-weapon States speak solely of reduction and insist that even this issue is best left to bilateral negotiations amongst the nuclear-weapon States themselves. This can, in my view, be called total indifference to the grave concern of the international community over the risks of nuclear weapons. It is even more regrettable that some nuclear-weapon States have advanced the doctrine of nuclear response against non-nuclear threats, thus further exacerbating an already alarming situation.

The NPT was never meant to perpetuate the possession of nuclear weapons and create two categories of States. Such a reading of the non-proliferation regime will make it inherently unstable and will invite further proliferation based on the misperception - and I underline, the misperception - that acquisition of these deadly and inhumane weapons increase security or national clout.

At first glance, it might seem that there is no possibility for reconciliation between divergent positions on nuclear disarmament. But we believe otherwise. As the threats associated with the unrealistic and dangerous insistence on maintaining the nuclear option become ever more evident, the international community will find it ever more necessary, sooner or later, to enable the CD to commence serious negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We believe the self-evident reality is slowly sinking in that the advantages of a nuclear-free world by far outweigh whatever prestige or misplaced sense of security is derived from the balance of terror of a nuclear arms race, old or new.

The President of the CD has been given the mandate to hold intensive consultations on agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". We welcome this initiative, and are of the view that this process should be dynamic and vigorous and must be pursued with the same enthusiasm by the incoming Presidents. It should also provide for the early establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

In the meantime, further effective steps, including confidence-building measures, might be considered in order to pave the ground for the realization of the ultimate objective. The CD, among other items, is to deliberate on transparency in armaments. This item includes transparency in nuclear armaments. Openness and transparency in this field would promote confidence and stability and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Similarly, it would facilitate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as well as more progress in the area of nuclear disarmament itself.

The General Assembly in its resolution 52/38 B of 9 December 1997 on transparency in armaments has provided for transparency in weapons of mass destruction. Given the fact that under the CWC and BWC, the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical and biological weapons have been banned, the only missing ring in the chain of resisting weapons of mass

(Mr. Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran)

destruction is nuclear weapons. Therefore, the nuclear-weapon States should be required to report on the quantity and type of their nuclear arsenals, delivery systems, the quantity and type of fissile materials, programmes for quantitative and qualitative development of nuclear weapons, as well as their activities in dismantling the existing nuclear warheads.

It is self-evident that the best assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of these weapons. However, as an interim measure and in line with the letter and spirit of the declaration of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agreed at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, as well as the decision of the CD at its first session, there exists the need to negotiate an international and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances (NSAs).

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to NSAs, particularly because States in the Middle East have not been able to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and benefit from its NSA advantages, due to the opposition by some nuclear States in support of Israel and its unsafeguarded nuclear activities and programmes. In addition, the granting of NSAs has so far been selective, in clear disregard of various international obligations.

For the NSA regime to be an effective instrument of non-proliferation, it should be a multilaterally negotiated and legally binding instrument. The question of the providers of NSAs, in light of recent developments, is a very sensitive and potentially contentious issue that can wisely be deferred to the conclusion of negotiations on other provisions of the instrument. The recipients are obviously non-nuclear-weapon parties to the NPT. We need not start from scratch. There are a good number of position papers by individual countries or groups of countries. What is needed is political will and commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States to move forward.

The urgent need to prevent the spill-over effect of the nuclear tests in South Asia underlines the imperative of establishing a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. The unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and clandestine nuclear programmes of Israel pose an imminent threat to the peace and security of the region. A mistake should not be repeated twice. Hence, the international community should exert every pressure on Israel to immediately abandon and dismantle its nuclear-weapon programmes, accede without any preconditions to the NPT and accept unconditionally the IAEA safeguards. Anything less would but encourage Israel to continue enhancing its nuclear arsenal, which will undoubtedly have grave consequences for regional, as well as global, peace and security.

In conclusion, let me stress that the time has come to transcend beyond short-sighted calculations of interest. We sincerely hope that the unfortunate incidents in South Asia would generate a strong momentum for multilateral negotiations on a phase programme for nuclear disarmament so as to address the nuclear threat at its very roots. Progress in this field requires persuasion, perseverance and pressure. The Conference on Disarmament has an historic opportunity and a unique responsibility to generate these necessary prerequisites while, at the same time, articulating pragmatic ideas to put them to best use.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Tarmidzi.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Mr. President, I should like, at the outset, to express my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I should like to assure you of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties. I also wish to avail of this opportunity to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Taher Al-Hussami of Syria, for his valuable contributions during his tenure. I also wish to welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined us in this forum.

The second session of our meetings this year is being held against the backdrop of some ominous developments in nuclear and related issues. These, in turn, have enjoined us to reassess our approaches to these priority questions as we brace ourselves to move into the uncharted expanse of the twenty-first century.

Of particular concern to my delegation are the nuclear tests conducted by two members of the CD, which have greatly complicated the nuclear dilemma. They have undermined the non-proliferation regime assiduously built for nearly three decades, threatened the objectives contained in various nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, constituted a serious setback for the concerted endeavours of the international community to achieve nuclear disarmament, and, more ominously, raised the spectre of a nuclear arms race and confrontation in South Asia with its attendant consequences.

In this context, we welcome the latest development in South Asia and applaud the constructive undertakings by both countries, India and Pakistan, friends of Indonesia, to reduce the tension. Likewise, we also welcome the positive initiatives taken by Iran to help overcome the insecure situation.

Indonesia, as a party to the NPT and a signatory to the CTBT, cannot condone the carrying out of nuclear-weapon tests by any country at any time. We share the widely held view that tests of any kind, underground or otherwise, should not be carried out as they pose a potent threat of proliferation and unacceptable risks to international peace and security. While we fully acknowledge the sovereign right of States to determine their own security requirements and the means to ensure them, as a non-nuclear State, such a security policy, in our view, should be implemented without recourse to nuclear arms.

It is clear that as long as these armaments are maintained, along with their security benefits, while no steady advances are made in nuclear disarmament through concrete measures, there will always be challenges to the non-proliferation regime and pressures to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability. Thus, apart from the unique geostrategic dynamics, recent developments in South Asia were triggered in large measure by a lack of substantial progress in nuclear disarmament in recent years, the perception that nuclear-weapon

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States are determined to maintain their arsenals in perpetuity, resentment of hegemony and domination, the selective implementation of the NPT's provisions, as well as defiance of the international consensus on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons and consistent refusal to assure the security of non-nuclear States in an internationally binding convention.

In dealing with the question of non-proliferation, therefore, the cooperation of all member States is indispensable. Such an approach allows for greater flexibility in accommodating the vital interests of all nations. The issue confronting the limitation of nuclear weapons is not only that of stemming proliferation but also that of formulating equitable strategic, security, technological and economic arrangements that apply equally to all States without discrimination.

The further accumulation of these weapons of mass destruction heightens the prospect of their use. As the report of the Canberra Commission has warned: "The proposition that large numbers of nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used - accidentally or by decision - defies credibility". This cannot but be of serious concern to the international community. Even though the two major Powers are no longer locked in military confrontation and the prospect of nuclear warfare has receded into the background, thousands of nuclear weapons are still on hair-trigger alert. On land, ICBMs are ready to launch within minutes, and at sea, nuclear-armed submarines are on round-the-clock patrol. Other critical questions to be addressed include the risk of technical malfunction; ageing and obsolete weapons; early-warning-system failures; inadvertent or accidental use of nuclear weapons; seizure of weapons or weapon materials and threats or actual use by non-State actors; and the dismantling of warheads, rather than just the delivery systems, such as missiles, which have long been the focus of all previous nuclear arms control agreements. The complexity of these and other issues calls for their consideration under multilateral auspices.

However, persistent refusal by the weapons States to initiate negotiations on the nuclear issues has long stifled our Conference and raised questions regarding its future role as an effective multilateral negotiating body and even its credibility. But we should remain steadfast in our endeavours and demonstrate the utility of the CD as an important forum to reach arms control agreements. The urgent need to put nuclear disarmament on the top of our agenda cannot be overemphasized. There has been no dearth of proposals for nuclear disarmament - only a lack of political will and determination and the corresponding lack of sensitivity to the collective concerns and interests of the international community. Let me recall, in this context, the balanced proposals of the non-aligned countries for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons and the report of the Canberra Commission, both submitted in 1996. There are also proposals submitted by seasoned observers of the disarmament scene. Taken together, their implementation can lead towards the total abolition of nuclear weapons in accordance with a phased programme and within a given period or periods. Yet, what we have witnessed is a dismal failure to undertake any negotiations on nuclear disarmament since the indefinite extension of the NPT, as if that was a goal in itself unrelated to the fulfilment of Treaty commitments. It

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also emanates from the advisory opinion of the ICJ which established the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this context, my delegation is encouraged by the renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament which is reflected in the communiqué issued by the nuclear-weapon States early this month here in Geneva, and its faithful implementation should revive the long-stalled negotiations.

When the Group of 21 urged the CD to negotiate nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-weapons States were of the view that the matter does not fall within the authority of the CD. The nuclear-weapons States perceive nuclear disarmament to be a bilateral matter which should be dealt with bilaterally among themselves. However, this view will only encourage other nuclear-capable countries to develop their own nuclear arsenals.

Indonesia, together with other Non-Aligned Movement countries, is of the view that nuclear disarmament should be dealt with in multilateral negotiations because it is the concern of the international community and not solely of the nuclear-weapons States. In this regard, changing the current policy of "do as we say and not as we do" is vitally important if proliferation is to be halted.

Security issues are also of paramount importance to the vast majority of non-nuclear States. It is pertinent to recall that in April 1995, prior to the convening of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, individual declarations made by the weapons States contained inherent weaknesses and deficiencies and left ample room for subjective interpretations. There is also a distinct possibility that under certain circumstances, especially after the initiation of hostilities, such assurances may be unilaterally withdrawn. They do not meet the security needs of non-nuclear-weapon States since they have not been multilaterally negotiated and they are unverifiable, and they do not offer legitimate and binding assurances to meet the valid concerns of non-nuclear States. In the context of an imbalance of obligations between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, the latter called for unconditional and legally binding assurances in the form of an international convention. For without such ironclad guarantees, the non-nuclear-weapon States will remain subject to the threat or use of nuclear weapons. In my delegation's view, the CD should take a fresh look at this question in the light of recent developments in the international arena.

Indonesia is firmly committed to the non-proliferation regime and to nuclear disarmament. In the post-cold-war era, there is a window of opportunity to make nuclear-weapon reductions irreversible and move towards their internationally verifiable abolition. If we miss the present opportunity and continue with our outmoded ways of thinking, a new period of global tension may result, together with a renewed nuclear arms race aggravated by new technological developments and by further proliferation.

In recent months we have witnessed a galaxy of former heads of State or government, as well as generals and admirals, some of whom commanded nuclear forces, drawing our attention to the dangers posed by nuclear armaments. They

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reflect powerful statements of common concern and mounting international support for their abolition, which remains an imperative. It is therefore time to initiate negotiations for nuclear disarmament under the auspices of our forum, leading to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Indonesia for his statement and for his kind words of support. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The representative of Bangladesh, Ambassador Chowdhury.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): Mr. President, as we approach the conclusion of your presidency, I would be derelict of my responsibilities if I did not compliment you upon the manner in which you have stewarded us in the past month. Events at times rendered your task difficult, but you carried it out with distinction. You did Turkey, and your friends like us, proud.

It was good to see Deputy Minister Dr. Javad Zarif, an old friend, and to hear him again today. His contribution to disarmament deliberations is well known, and this morning we had further evidence of it. Ambassador Tarmidzi's statement also underscored some key focal points of interest and concern for us in the region.

But I have asked for the floor today to inform the Conference of a positive development in South Asia. Upon invitation from the distinguished Prime Minister of India, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, undertook a visit to New Delhi on 16 June. She was most cordially received, and the discussions were assessed as successful. In a similar vein, upon invitation from the distinguished Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawar Sharif, she will be visiting Islamabad on 24 June. The central purposes of these visits are to foster goodwill and to build and enhance confidence among the leaders and nations of South Asia. I shall keep the Conference further apprised in due course.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you very much, Ambassador, for your statement and for your warm words to the Chair. I also thank you for the information that you have given on the interaction between your country and Pakistan and India.

As there are no other speakers, I wish to submit to you my views that I gathered during my presidency.

As this is the last plenary meeting of the Conference under the presidency of Turkey, I should like to report to you the preliminary findings I was able to derive from the consultations held pursuant to paragraph 1 of decision CD/1501, which requires the President to "pursue intensive consultations and seek the views of [the CD] members on appropriate methods and approaches for dealing with agenda item 1 entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', taking into account all proposals and views on this item".

(The President)

As you are aware, in implementation of this responsibility, I, with the assistance of the outgoing and incoming Presidents, deemed it advisable, in the first instance, to convene a meeting of all delegations that made specific proposals on how to deal with this item. The purpose of that meeting was to establish whether such a gathering could go beyond the clearly stated positions and attempt to develop a convergence of views on a mechanism or mechanisms for dealing with all issues relating to this item. While that meeting was useful in providing us with a better understanding of delegations' views, it did not, however, allow for the development of a common approach on how to deal with this item. Delegations from the Group of 21 reiterated their known positions and stressed that the participation of the five nuclear-weapon States was essential in any meaningful dialogue aimed at developing a consensus on all relevant issues. Other delegations saw merit in starting the consultation process with an effort at harmonizing the specific proposals submitted by delegations and gradually expanding the areas of convergence with the participation of all members of the Conference. I then held a series of bilateral consultations with the delegations of the nuclear-weapon States, during which I conveyed to them the views expressed at the meeting held with delegations having made specific proposals. I also met with a number of other delegations from different groups who expressed interest in consulting me on a bilateral basis.

Last Thursday, as you know, I convened informal open-ended consultations in order to inform you of the steps undertaken so far in implementation of paragraph 1 of CD/1501 and to give all delegations an opportunity to express their views on the issues at hand. I do not think that I need to dwell on the proceedings of that meeting, which was widely attended. I should like, however, to emphasize the high priority attached by all delegations to this item, the recognition by all of the complexity of the issues involved, as well as the need for the Conference to develop, without delay, consensus on an appropriate mechanism or mechanisms to deal with this item in all its aspects. I should also like to stress that recent important developments outside the CD have brought about a qualitatively new situation which undoubtedly affected our consideration of this issue. In this connection, I wish to refer to the joint communiqué issued by the P5 Foreign Ministers at their meeting in Geneva on 4 June 1998 and to resolution 1172 (1998) adopted by the United Nations Security Council on this matter.

From the intensive consultations we held on agenda item 1, I can derive the following preliminary findings.

First, there is a general recognition of the importance of this item and the need for the Conference to address it as a matter of priority, especially in view of the nuclear tests conducted by two States in South Asia. However, views still differ on what specifically the Conference should negotiate under this item.

Second, the importance of the early start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is also widely shared, although the scope of

(The President)

such a treaty and the political context for its negotiation - whether as a stand-alone measure or as part of nuclear disarmament - still require further consideration.

Third, the Group of 21 continues to attach the highest priority to nuclear disarmament and to the need for the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on the subject, on the basis of the proposals made by the Group in this regard.

Fourth, the P5 continue to stress the importance of the Conference starting negotiations on an FMCT on the basis of the agreed mandate, and reiterated their determination to fulfil their commitments relating to nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT.

Fifth, the Conference also has before it a number of proposals aimed at enabling it to address all issues relating to this item in a comprehensive manner in the framework of one single ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate, as well as other proposals providing for a structured discussion or deliberation on nuclear disarmament. So I believe the Conference should focus on developing consensus on proposals which enjoy the widest support.

The magnitude and complexity of the tasks ahead of us cannot be overemphasized. The positions held by delegations and groups of delegations on this important issue are clearly identified. What is required is a display of the necessary spirit of compromise and flexibility which would allow us to translate into action what is now the subject of a convergence of views, while continuing our efforts to enlarge the areas of consensus to cover the security concerns of all. Due to the nature and complexity of the questions involved and the limited time span of my tenure, I am not in a position to make any recommendations at this time. However, I am convinced the process of intensive consultations on agenda item 1 launched during my presidency has proven its value and the existing momentum will hopefully enable the Conference to take action on this item in the third part of the 1998 session. It would be the responsibility of my successor in this function, Ambassador Maimeskul of Ukraine, to lead the Conference along this path. In his efforts he can count on the assistance of the incoming President, Ambassador Soutar of the United Kingdom, and myself. It is my firm belief that recent events have clearly shown that the entire nuclear disarmament cause must be revived both in pace and scope to match the newly demonstrated urgency.

This concludes my report on my preliminary findings.

I should also like to express my satisfaction that the Conference has embarked on its substantive work. The chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances and the six Special Coordinators on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, anti-personnel landmines, transparency in armaments, review of its agenda, expansion of its membership and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, with whom I had

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the privilege of collaborating, have embarked on substantive and consultative work. I am confident that the Conference will make concrete progress under their able leadership.

I should sincerely like to express my warmest and best wishes to the new President of the CD, Ambassador Maimeskul of the Ukraine. I look forward to continuing our joint task under his presidency. I wish also to thank him and Mr. Al-Hussami of Syria for their valuable contribution to our endeavours, as well as for their support. I should like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, all the secretariat staff and the interpreters for their invaluable assistance in organizing and carrying out the work of the Conference. I thank all the delegations to the Conference on Disarmament for their contributions and for their active cooperation with the President.

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for the period 22-26 June 1998. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances and the Special Coordinators. It is merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should remind delegations that the Special Coordinator on transparency in armaments, Mr. Grecu of Romania, will hold open-ended informal consultations tomorrow, 19 June, at 10 a.m. in this room.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 25 June 1998, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.